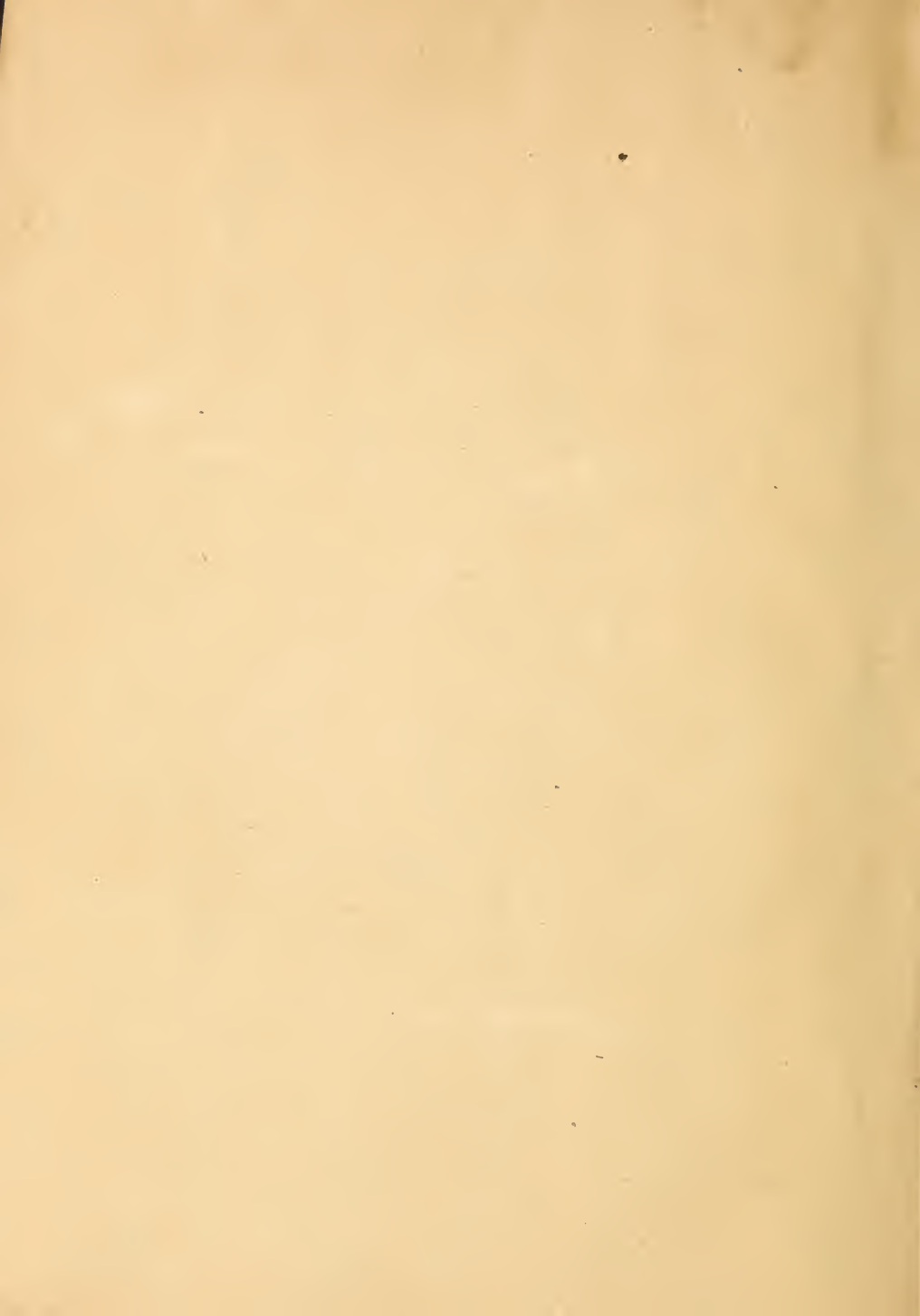






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T H E

Conformists Plea

F O R T H E

Nonconformists.

O R,

A Just and Compassionate Representation

O F T H E

Present State and Condition

O F T H E

NON-CONFORMISTS.

Edward W. Pearce.

A S T O

- I. The Greatness of their Sufferings.
- II. Hardness of their Case.
- III. Reasonableness and Equity of their Desires and Proposals.
- IV. Qualifications, and Worth of their Persons.
- V. Peaceableness of their Behaviour.
- VI. The Churches Prejudice by their Exclusion, &c.

Humbly submitted to Authority.

By a Beneficed Minister, and a Regular Son of the Church of England.

London, Printed for Jonathan Robinson, at the Golden
Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1681.

Nonconformists.

at the Golden

186.

To the Bookseller.

C Onceiving it to be a Duty to communicate my Judgment (given privately by Parts, as occasion hath been offered) of the *Non-conformists*, and their Case, and also resolved to conceal my Name, which can add no Reputation to them, nor to these Papers; I have sent them to you, before any other Stranger, (and who but a Stranger may be trusted with a Concealment of one he knows not) for two Reasons. 1. Because, one of your Acquaintance, who (not knowing my Design) gave me a very good Character of you, as Ingenuous, Honest, Candid, a lover of Goodness and good Men, (whether *Conformists* or *Non-conformists*) as well without, as within the way of your Trade. 2. Because it is not hard to guess at the Bookseller by his Author, and the Author by his Bookseller; therefore if you may fall within the compass of this Observation, you fit me, because you printed the *Conforming Non-conformist*, &c. And another, the *Christian Temper*, which Title was taking with me, (a Temper rare among Christians) which I labour after; and if I have not expressed it in these Sheets, I shall take as little pleasure in them, as the nicest Reader shall in any thing that differs from him. I refer it to you to judge, whether it is like to be profitable or not: for before the publication of Books, your Faculty either are Judges, or find out Judges of them; and the Readers eat, or refuse, only what you have tasted of before-hand. Read and judge deliberately, and let me know e're long of your Approbation, by seeing it abroad; or your dislike, by its suppression. And then I have but one Request, that you would give them a private and a decent Burial, for the Author's sake; who tho' he be but a simple Man, yet means well, and for his Master's sake: It shall no more offend me that you stifle, than that if another take the name of them, provided he be *Philagathos*.

To the READER.

THe whole Book is to the Reader, yet a short Epistle to him may be necessary.

1. To intreat him to spare his pains in writing against me, who do not begin or maintain a Controversy against him, or against any other; *Pacem te quærimus omnes.* You may perhaps seek to keep it within the unaltered Constitution, and be so much for Peace, that you would have not one Dissenter in the Land. I am against Dissenters also, we agree so far; but I am against Dissenters within doors, that keep Dissenters out; let us make up the Breach as fast and as strong as we can.

2. To inform him, that I do not look upon the Nonconformists as the only Men of God, that I am not hired by them, nor speak for them in hopes of Preferment under the Presbyterian Government, to be set up (as some fear) I assure him I never fear it, nor hope for it.

3. To make my self known to him, that I am not a Man in Power to shew the Non-conformists favour, nor a Man of fame to serve them by any Testimonial; but that I laboured to nourish some good Dispositions and Qualities.

1. To adore one and the same Spirit in different Gifts, Administrations, and Degrees.

2. To think more highly of others than of my self, not only as they are in Power, but as in real Worth, tho but at the Footstool.

3. Thankfulness to God; and were it in my power to shew it to every one that ever spake a word in season to me, which many of the Non-conformists have done, when I was ignorant and out of the way, whose Names are in honour with me; and the like I acknowledg, and ever shall, to several that now conform. Time was, when they all spake the same Things, and carried on the same Work; which was the Instruction, Conversion, Consolation, and Edification of Souls; not biting one another, nor grudging at one another. I never heard,

in many hundreds of Sermons, diversities of Opinions, either set up by some, or pulled down by others. We heard indeed that some were Independents, others Presbyterians, and others Episcopal, but we heard no such things from Pulpits. I perceive some Men think that the preaching of those Days was meer Fanaticism, blessing the Usurpation, railing against Bishops, or deifying Calvin with an Infallibility; Non ego Lutherum prædico, sed Christum, said Luther. Calvin was an admirable Man, a great Stranger to them that speak most against him; but he was preached no further than Christ spake in him; Non Calvinum sed Christum prædicabant.

4. *If I were partial, I wrong my self by partiality, but I ought to be just, and by being just, I injure no Man. I have heard the Non-conformists vilified, and represented according to the Fancies, and Passions, or Interests of Men. I durst not but be just to them, as to eminent Professors of the Christian Faith, and think that common Christianity hath suffered much by their silencing and disparagement. A great part of the World is made to believe, that the Non-conformists are not fit to be employed in the Church, nor trusted by the State. But what they are God knoweth, and the World may know if they please to consult their Writings, and to examine their Declaration of their Tenents. They are not, to them that know them, what they are reported by, and to them that know them not. I seldom see any of them, very seldom converse with them, yet I know them sufficiently to make me bewail their condition, and the vast damage to thousands of Souls, not in the out-skirts alone, but very Heart of England, by their Exclusion and Suppression; who are both able and willing to promote the everlasting Interest of precious Souls, which are committed in the mean while, in many parts of the Land, to them that neither can nor will. If a Husband-man have more Land than he can Till, much of his Land must lie Fallow and yeeld no profit; if a Husband-man have a great Harvest, and discharge his Labourers, he will suffer loss. It is a small Parish indeed that will not find a pretty industrious Man work enough: There is enough for us, and for them to do, if there were the greatest Union of Minds, and wisest distributions, according to each Mans Abilities.*

To the Reader.

5. I have sometimes taken heart to vindicate what may be justified in them, out of a just respect to the Common Faith, and Protestant Religion; and there is no more objected, nor worse things imputed to them by Protestants, than Papists impute to us all: If I have no courage to plead for them, so far as their Cause will bear it, I may prove a Coward in mine own Cause; Every good Man ought to be true to Truth, and the common Christianity.

6. Not to revile nor provoke them that differ from me. If I have described any Persons of an imposing persecuting temper, with any measure of severity: if there be no such Persons, it is a mistake, and no injury; if there be such, Writing is Painting, I have fitted my Colours to the Face, I have not represented any sowness of Countenance, but what I saw upon it. Let us all entertain Peace, and give it place to rule in our Hearts; seek Peace and pursue it, and pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. Farewel.

The Reader is entreated to excuse the *Errata*, the Author being absent from the Press. These few the Printer hath observed, viz. Page 5. read *Pasee*. P. 11. l. 22. r. *As, that many Ministers are poor.* P. 20. l. 21. r. *Nonconformity.* P. 27. r. *that maintained a Necessity.* P. 28. l. 37. r. *Fort.* P. 29. l. 39. r. *concluded.* P. 30. the words of *Calfaill* should have been in the Margin. P. 61. l. 28. r. *Squama.*

A Compassionate Representation of the present Case and Condition of the Non-conformists, &c.



I Am a Christian, and therefore a Member of the Body ; and as such, am obliged by the Law of Christ, and excited by his Grace, to endeavour the Growth, Perfection, and Unity of that one Body ; and according to the measure of Grace and Life received, I cannot but feel the pain of Dislocations, Wounds, Weakness, Excision, Sickness, or Suffering of any Part or Member of it. If I have any Faith or Love, I cannot but pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*.

But Ministers above all Christians must have Salt in themselves, and be at peace one with another : they must preach the Gospel themselves, and rejoice that it is preached by others, tho otherwise-minded ; and all Christians must pray that the Word of the Lord may have a free course, and be glorified.

I have some feeling of the broken state of the Church of God in this Kingdom : but, alas ! how little do I feel ? how unfit am I to move those that have healing Hands, and store of Ointments, to heal our Wounds ? If I could but open the Case of a Church for many years in pain, to be delivered of her Burden, groaning to bring forth Unity and Peace, but cannot : followed long with strong Convulsions, that it is a wonder she hath not died in every Fit ; I might move the compassions of her Physicians, to hold a Consultation to expedite her Cure. Many of her Sons have of late bemoan'd her ; and some have made enquiries into the Causes of her Illness ; but their Compassions have done themselves more good than her. She is not at all the better for their trouble for her ; she is as ill at ease as at any time, in a wasting, complaining, declining state. And to say the truth, there are many that make sad Complaints of her Passion, Harshness, and Severity ; They say, that she procured the turning of many of her Ministers out of their Master's service ; that she is not kind to her own Children, but locketh up her Bread from them, or appoints Stewards that do not faithfully dispense unto them, but sell their Bread, and put the Mo-

ney in their own pockets. And those Stewards for small Wages hire under-Officers, that feed them but once a day, most commonly with that which costs them but little. And that she is so severe, that all that serve her, must put in Bonds for more than they can pay, and subscribe to impossibilities; and, in short, they say, she usurps authority over her Husband. They say, they can serve him, but cannot please her; they can serve him, and die for him, but cannot live in the same House with her.

For my part I will say no ill of her, nor make bate between the Bride and the Bridegroom; I am honoured to be a friend to him, and indeed I cannot be his friend, and not hers. But this, I'll rather say, that she hath taken some ill courses, and no good courses for her own peace; she hath been led, and abused by ill Instruments about her, and is indeed changed from what she was in former times, and is not so kind and tender as she was wont to be, by report of many that knew her heretofore. I am exceeding sorry for her. O that I could give her ease! I am no Physician my self; but a sorry Messenger may run and call the Doctor, and beseech him, that if he have any bowels or tendernefs of heart, he would make haste and apply all his skill to save the Life, and restore the Health of the Mother of many Children, who will fall into the cruel hands of Pope and Devil, so soon as her eyes are closed. O how they long to hear of her Dissolution! O what a sick and divided House do I live in! I cannot take rest in my Soul for the Contentions of my dear and loving Mother's Wife; I cannot lie dry in my Bed for the continual dropping: My Pilgrimage and course for these many years, hath been most uncomfortable unto me for the continual dropping in a rainy day. The Contentions are grown notorious, all our neighbours know them. 'Tis a most divided House! I have no heart to make repetitions, of what I have read and heard to pass between my dear Mother and my dear Brethren; between my Brethren amongst themselves, and the fellow-Servants. It is a shame that the World should know it! But it cannot be hid: our very Enemies laugh among themselves, and hope to turn us all out of doors, and get possession. They have been disputing, stating of Cases, petitioning, pleading, and appealing to the Judgment-seat; that my heart akes to think of these things. I have prayed for Peace, and have denied my self, to please my Mother. I will not find fault with her; my Soul longs for peace, and if I might prevail, I cannot tell what I would do, on condition that her Servants that have been turned out, may be taken in. But because I cannot see how this will be without an Order of the Justices of Peace, I will humbly represent the Case as truly as I can, and intreat their Order for a speedy settlement of my displaced Brethren. The Complaints are grievous. The Mother complains of the disobedience of her Children, they will not be ruled by her:

she

she would have them to be all of her mind, and uniform. She is a Godly Woman indeed, and keeps Prayers morning and evening in her House; and she is earnest to have them Assent and Consent to all and every thing contained in a certain Book, and use no other. Some of them do not love to be impos'd upon, and think they are of those years, as to know how to pray, and plead a Promise from their Master, of his holy Spirit to assist them. In the discharge of any Impos'd Form (but others can submit to that, if that would do) She would have them wear white Linen, wide Sleeves, &c. kneel when they eat and drink at the Lord's Table; and will have all their Children baptized, and also crossed in the forehead, which if you would see, is not to be seen, for indeed it vanishes as soon as made. For these things she pleads Authority in her Self, and from her Supreme Governour upon Earth. Since her Marriage with Kings, she is grown wealthy in Estate. The Woman that was sometimes in the Wilderness, drawn before Magistrates, cast into Prison, that was forced to hide her head in Conventicles in those nights of old, (that for many Ages spake a hard language, wore a triple Crown, went in gorgeous Apparel, of Ceremonies upon Ceremonies, carried in pomp, (Princes did kiss her feet) that adorn'd her Walls with Tapistry and Images; grew Imperial in making Laws, and gave her mouth to Cursing and Bitterness.) I say, she now can shew her face, that was sometimes forced to hide it, and is become Reformed and Chaste; but having Lordships and Preferments to bestow, she hath been rather like a Domineering Mistress, than gentle Mother, as some of her Children have complained of her; and hath rather suted her self to the Mode of Earthly Kings, than the Will of her Heavenly King and Husband. It cannot be denied but that some have been ambitious of her Favour, and for the Preferments which they have got by their Ceremoniousness, have done her no good, and to get up above her fellow-servants, have set her above her self. And for ought I see, these ambitious covetous Persons have been evil Instruments of great Contentions and Differences with her Children; and they also having a spice of *Adam's* nature, and growing stomachful, with their Reason, could not bear a Superiority among Equals, and seeing they were Children of the same Father, knew no other difference than for Prudential Government, a Priority of Order, or the Honour of Seniors; but not a Superiority of Degree and Power.

The more powerful House (for, alas! they have divided Houses) that they may make Laws and govern others, do attribute great Authority to the Church; indeed as great as Jesus Christ her King and Husband had: as if when he ascended into Heaven, he gave among his other Gifts, even all that he had himself, to his Church and Spouse. One R.R. a Writer that

professed to much intimacy with her, as to undertake to give her Sense, and Reason of her doings, doth assert her Power and Authority to be twofold ; “ As all other Bodies Politick, the one of
Preface before his Col- “ Jurisdiction to correct and reform, by Spiritual
lection of Canons, &c. “ Censures, to preserve the Churches Purity, and
 “ reduce to Unity the Troublers of the Churches
 “ Peace, not by Arguments alone, but Spiritual Censures, even to casting
 “ out of the Church. The other, a Power of Legislation, to make Canons
 “ and Constitutions. For tho our Great Lord (saith he) hath already gi-
 “ ven to his Church most holy and wise Rules and Laws for the same
 “ purposes ; yet because they are general, and there may some doubts and
 “ controversies arise about their meaning, it doth necessarily follow that
 “ there must be an Authority left to this Church, and Governours there-
 “ of, to make new Laws upon emergent occasions, to determine particu-
 “ larities, (where by the way observe, that from a Power to resolve the
 Doubts that may arise about the Sence and Meaning of those General
 Laws of Christ, he gets ground by stealth, even to infer a Power to
 make *new Laws*) “ and there must be a definitive Sentence of Superiours to
 “ decide Doubts and Controversies. He argues both from the reason of the
 “ thing, and that Christ gave this Power, *Joh. 20. 21, 22. As my Father sent*
 “ *Me ; so send I you.* And one particular of Jurisdiction there expressed ;
 “ *Whose soever Sins ye bind on Earth, they are bound in Heaven.* The Legislative
 “ power of making Laws and Constitutions for regulating Manners, and
 “ determining Controversies, cannot be denied to be granted in that large
 “ Commission ; *As my Father sent me, so send I You, &c.* (Where again
 observe how he grows upon us, from a Mission to a Commission. They are
 sent indeed, but their Commission is no other than to go, when sent.)
 Yea in the next sentence he saith, our Lord commissions his Apostles, (ob-
 serve, that pag. 1.) he defines the one Holy Church, to be the Society of
 Believers to whom that double power was given ; but here it is given to
 the Apostles : (Have the Society of Believers the same power the Apostles
 had ? or, doth the Commission given to the Apostles, empower the Socie-
 ty of Believers to do as they did ?) “ He commissions the Apostles (saith
 “ he) with the same necessary standing Power that he had, and *exercised as*
 “ *a man for the good of the Church* : this is a Commission in general for ma-
 “ king Laws ; Then in particular, for making Articles, and Decisions of
 “ Doctrines, controverted Power is more explicit and expresse, *Mat. 28.*
 “ *All Power is given unto me : Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations ;* that is,
 “ with Authority. And what is it to teach with Authority, but to com-
 “ mand and oblige all people to receive the Truth so taught ? When I
 read such Discourses, and such Consequences, I do less wonder that they
 who

who are given to strong Delusions, do see those dazling Wonders; *in Tu er Petrus, & super hanc Petram*; or, that see the two Swords committed to St. Peter, in, *Passe Oves meas*, when he was only appointed to be a carefull Shepherd, *Passe Oves meas*? But some Men are perspicuous, and have Eyes to lead others (that want Eyes of their own) and can see as clearly into a plain Text, as a Priest can into the bottom of a *Papist's* Heart, by his All-seeing Ear in Auricular Confession.

Others do build their Towers and Castles upon other Texts, which I pass by. — Thus for the ample power of the Church. The power which Christ hath given to her I revere and acknowledge.

Others go another way to work, and lay the specious Towers and Battlements of *Uniformity* and *Discipline* and *Ceremonies* upon the King's Supremacy; affirming two things: 1. That the Modes required, are things indifferent. 2. That the chief Magistrate may make Constitutions about things indifferent.

And some upon one, and some upon another ground, do raise a great Dust, Contention, and Discontent: some quarrel not, but are of a moderate and peaceable disposition, and wish for Peace and Concord: but these are quarrelled with for their Moderation. And truly it is an ill sign of an aspiring contentious nature, in those that will fall out with Peacemakers, that are sober and moderate, and wish that both contending sides may understand one another better, and love one another more, and remove the matter of debates and strifes. How are the Ejected called! it grieves my heart to hear them called all to naught: and how are these names returned? And many throw Bones of Contention among them; whisper, and backbite, and carry tales, to foment the heats, which gentle tempers labour to cool.

The other broken Party of the dissatisfied and complaining Family, are not so well agreed as it were to be desired; but they differ more in Accidentals than Substantials from one another, I mean the Brethren whose cause I attempt to open. Some of them will consent to an imposed Form of Prayer, and all to Decency and Order, as necessary in Christian Assemblies; and, in a word, to all that is contained in the General Rules and Laws of Christ, and rationally deduced from them, as far as they do understand. They all submit to an Episcopacy of primitive Institution and Limitation, with the due Exercise of Discipline; and they that cannot agree to the same Form of Government, are for maintaining Peace and Love under different Forms, and they yeeld enough to have made them Ministers in the Apostles days, and after. They say, 'tis true, that to us there is but one Lawgiver, and that is Christ; and they will teach whatsoever he hath commanded them: They hold that his Laws are sufficient
for

for the Government of the Church; that the Church must be subject to Christ; that her Power, as *Protestant* Writers have maintained, is only Ministerial under Him; that all Power is seated still in Him, and not made over by Him to any other; that the Churches Power is not decisive, (for as such they argue, that Controversies have not been decided, by any that here ingrossed the name of the *Church*) but declarative, and so far binding, as the Reasons are cogent and divine. They acknowledge the King's Supremacy, as it hath been declared by former Learned Writers against the *Romish* Antagonists, and Usurpers of that Sovereign Right: [as by *Nowel* against *Dorman*, *Rainold's* conference with *Hart*, King *James*, and many more.] They assert a Liberty which *Christ* hath given them, and cannot subject themselves, as the servants of men, in the things of God.

They offer to assent to all the Essentials of the Christian Faith, to observe all the Ordinances of *Christ*, and every part of his Worship, and Decency and Order in the Worship of God, as was said before; and, in short, do say, Shew us but what the Apostles Rule was, and we will walk according to it, and, as far as we have attained, be of one mind, and walk according to the same Rule.

But then, they can never yeeld to declare an unfeigned Assent and Consent to Laws, Rubricks, and Ceremonies, that are significant of any Grace, or obligatory to any Duty of the Covenant of Grace, or to make Ceremonies federal Signs, tho' not Seals; nor the Reading the *Apocrypha*, and Neglecting *Canonical Scripture*, and other things, which divers of them have spoken of at large, and cannot be repeated in this place. They profess, and we believe them, that they quarrel not because they may not be Lords and Bishops, or that others are so promoted; they declare it is no grief to them, if the Magistrate, or legal Patrons, bestow the Revenues of the Church upon whom they please, and are legally qualified according to the Constitution. They only beg the use of that Liberty of their Consciences, to preach and worship God according to the Primitive Rule, and Simplicity; and that they may not be Ejected and Excommunicated, and forced to beg their Bread, because they cannot consent to what *they cannot believe*, nor vow against their Duty.

The danger of giving them a Toleration, while they remain Dissenters, is strongly suggested, from the multiplication of *Papists*, *Socinians* and *Jews*, as the effect of the Toleration in the *Netherlands*.

But two things may be replied: 1. Widen the Terms, which may be done with safety to the Church, and there will be no need of a Toleration, they will be incorporated with us. 2. There can be no such danger from Christians of the same Faith, and substantial Worship, but of different Accidental Modes, as from *Socinians*, *Papists*, *Jews*, of a contrary Faith

Faith and Worship. And why we cannot be as kind and liberal to Natives, indulging a Liberty to them in small things, as we are to *French, Dutch,* and to *Lutherans*, I do not know.

I have represented the Divisions of this most famous Church of Christ, not with the exactness of an Historian, nor of an Arbitrator, or a Moderator, but as best suiting with a Man in haste, and trouble. And, here's enough to move the honest and faithful Justices to arbitrate Differences, and command the Peace. Nothing else will do, nor any other Man so likely to compose the Difference as they. For Prayers innumerable have been made to God; who acts by means in settlements of Peace and Order: therefore we must pray Men too. The different Parties will not agree. The Commissioners *disputed, * *in the Savoy, an.*
and both carried the Cause. The Ejected humbly petitioned the Bishops for Peace; they would not hear *1662, commissioned*
by the King. them. And what Arguing, Preaching, Writing hath been ever since! Some Reverend Sons of the Church, in love to Peace, and fear of Enemies, have earnestly called and exhorted the Dissenting Ejected Brethren to come and unite, to come into the Present Constitution, as safest, as strongest, as best, &c. But if they could not come in at the Narrow Door, eighteen years ago, and the Door as narrow still as it was then, and there be the same Cross-bars laid across, as were then, to keep them out, to what purpose is the Exhortation? Is there a great Storm a coming? they think that Christ is ⁱⁿ the same Ship, and they are as safe as any other. They may clearly plead, they could have conformed at first, upon better worldly terms than now; they might have saved what they have lost, and got their share with others: to come now to conform, when all places are full, and not enow for numerous Expectants, and when there is nothing for them without tedious waiting; and if their Judgments and Consciences could not enter then, how can they now? Unless their Heads have voided all their Reasons, and so are grown less, or that Custom hath made the Entrance smoother for them. Learned and Worthy Men have written for and against, and are they gained over to one another? If they are, it is more than they will confess. The one writes *the Mischief of Separation*; the other denies the Charge and Proof; and another throws back the Mischief, a Mischief of Impositions: and many Swords are drawn by Seconds, too many bitter words for the Children of the same Heavenly Father, that are called to One, even to the One Hope of their Calling. The one writes, *You are guilty of Schism*: and the other says, *Who made it?*
 — My Bowels, my Bowels! *O thou the Prince of Peace, make Peace in thine own House, Family, and Kingdom*; make of these twain, one Body, and let there be no Schism in it: as they are made One Body, in One, the same
 Breast-

Breastplate of Faith, in the same Girdle of Truth ; so let them be shod with the Shoes of the Gospel of Preparation of Peace, and let not one hinder another to run, but cause both to walk in the same path, to put on Charity, and to have the same mind that was in thee. —

Methinks it were but fit for us, who weekly petition our good Lord to *deliver us from all Uncharitableness, from all false Doctrine, Heresie and Schism*, out of a Spirit of Love (if the Peace of God rule in our Hearts) upon our knees to petition our Governours for our Brethrens enlargement, and reunion with us, that they may not lie under the Censures and Reproaches of open Sinners, nor lie under the Imputation of Schism, and other suspensions, and be the subject of Scorn to every *Papistical Scribler*, and many other Mischiefs and Slanders : But there being no hope of that, let every Man do his part for healing of the Breaches. And therefore I cannot but ask my Superiours Pardon to handle a tender point indeed, even to recommend the Case of my Reverend Brethren the *Nonconformists*, to the good Opinion, and charitable thoughts of them that can help with one Act to decide, what a thousand Volumns cannot. I would not, if possible, be misunderstood, I am for Unity and Conformity, but not such an Uniformity as hinders Unity, by turning the Church into a Party. I am not a partial *Hyper-assister*, they can best manage their Cause, as best knowing their own mind, neither have they been wanting to it ; Nor shall I give my Mother the Church an unbecoming word ; but yet between the Judicious, Holy and Peaceable part of Fathers and Brethren of it, and the Faction-making Aspiring-party, I cannot but distinguish. Indeed these call themselves [*the Church*], but by monopolizing the Church, and ingrossing the Goods of the Church if they could ; they have no greater share of the Spirit of the true Catholick Church, than their despised Brethren, commonly called *Schismatics* by them. These are *supra*, or *Trans-Conformists*, that keep the Rule of Conformity much as they do their Residence. These Men are *Noneconformists* too, as I could shew in some considerable particulars, and are a *Rubrick* to themselves. But my business is not to accuse them ; but seeing the most are *Non-conformists*, either above or under the Rule, (a Rule, if strictly kept at all times, in all Offices, where were a man's Prudence ? and if a Man hath no Prudence to use, or may not use it, he is very unfit to be a Minister in the Church of God.) I am for the calling of more *Non-conformists* into the Company, and for making *Non-conformists Conformists*.

Our blessed Saviour, in the Parable, compares himself to an Houholder going a far Journey, that gave authority to his Servants, and to every Man his work, and commanded the Porter to watch ; and when he went, he left Peace as a Legacy : *My Peace I leave with you*. But, alas ! how few have sought

fought to get and keep that Legacy, or to do their Work? We may with Sorrow look into it, and find it, in his Absence, a most broken and divided House. In it we shall find two sorts of Children, all by the same Father, but not as if all of a Mother: The elder and the greater combine, make a mighty Party, and they even rule the Mother. These have the best of every thing, and snatch what the others had, or should have, and part all as they please among themselves, and use their poor Brethren no better than if they were Bastards. These complain, and entreat, and beg: but if they beg, they are not regarded; if they complain, they are peevish and discontented, deserve nothing, or no better than to be turned out of doors; if a Man pities them, and pleads for them, he is one of them. — The greater say, These peevish whining Children are disobedient to our Mother, vex her Bowels out, hinder all Government and Uniformity; if it were not for them, how happy would it be with us! But who can tell, but the great Ones may fall out among themselves? The Ejected have written, pleaded their Cause, drawn up their Case, and petitioned, but to what purpose? To as much as a Man that hath a good Right to a part of an Inheritance, but possessed by an elder Brother, who thinks he can prescribe for all, and plead Possession and Law; besides that, his Friends being Judges in the Court have given it him: This poor younger Brother has but a weak Purse, and few Friends, and what doth he but remonstrate, open his Case to many, and to his elder Brother, with humble Entreaties? But because he doth not go to Plow, or go a begging, or to some Corners of the Land, or go to some Foreign Plantation, he is rated as a troublesome Fellow, factious, and querulous, and knows not what he would have. Possessors are deaf to Petitioners. He that would recover his Right must go to Law for it, or lose all, except a little Alms, and that as pure Kindness, without pretence of Right or Desert.

There were a Company of Justices that sat long upon the Bench, and these first made an Order for Ministers to come in Bond to certain Duties, or else they discharge the Parishes of them, and turn them out of doors. Many hundreds refused to give in their Bonds, upon which they were turned out of their Houses and Parishes; and by an after-Order, they were not to come within five Miles of any Corporation, that sent Burgeesses to Parliament, or of their own last Abodes; forbidding them thereby any Employment in Corporations, to get their Livings, or the Charity of their former good Neighbours, if they had any. These and their Families are up and down the Nation, indeed, no better esteemed, which is a shame to tell, than Vagrants, by too many, yea, unfit to live.

Now so far as they may be very useful, it would be an Act worthy your place, to move the Honourable Bench of Justices, that never liked

that rigorous Order, in Mercy and Justice to take the Case of these ejected Ministers to consideration, and by another Order to capacitate them to dwell and labour in any City, Town Corporate, Village, and Parish whatsoever any thing in any Law or Statute to the contrary notwithstanding. I make bold to present these following Particulars to you, with Truth and Charity.

1. Their Sufferings.
2. The Hardness of their Case.
3. The Reasonableness and Equity of many of their Desires and Proposals.
4. Qualifications, and worth of their Persons.
5. Their Behaviour.
6. The Conclusion.

I. Their Sufferings. And they admit of various Aggravations, according to their various Circumstances. Some of them were Fellows of Colleges, and not otherwise preferred, in the heat of their Studies; and thereby, together with their Preferments and Livelihoods, lost what could not be recompensed to them, their Opportunities for learned Studies, and their Increase of Abilities, which is an inestimable Loss to any good and studious Man. It was a Trial to ingenuous Men, to be turned out of their Fellowships, (their little Regalities) and become Chaplains or Schoolmasters, for ten or twenty Pound *per annum*. And there is a difference in a Man's Entertainment, when he is courted and invited into a Family, or Employment, and when his Necessity drives him; and his Entertainment looks more like a Courtesy, than a Reward, with Obligation and Acknowledgment.

Others had but a little Time of Settlement in their Country-Preferments, to lay up any thing for themselves and Families. The more conscientious the Ministers are, the more apt to marry young, chusing rather to cast themselves double upon the Providence of God, than sin in a single Life; honest Marriage being honourable, tho attended with honest Poverty. And the most of their Ejectors, being single Persons, and having eaten the Cream of Preferments in their rising Times, had little consideration towards great and small Families. Indeed as many as had treasured up Faith in God, and his Promises, had enough to hold out their Pilgrimage: But if God was so kind, as to give them Faith to live by, they were unkind, that would force them to that noble kind of Life. If God had given them Grace, care should have been taken to find them Work. But God did not cast them out of their Work, nor out of his Care: He became their Patron whom Men ejected, and presented them, some to
Places

Places always vacant, dark, and neglected; and others he preferred from Country-Villages, to Towns and Cities. One Instance comes into my Mind, of Mr. *Edward Lawrence*, of *Basce-Church* in *Shropshire*, (a worthy Preacher) turned out with a Wife and many Children, who being asked how he did intend to live, made Answer, *The sixth Chapter of Matthew must maintain me, my Wife and Children, and it is enough for us all*, or words to this effect, (it is many years ago since a worthy Person told me the Story) and so he found it true: And being driven out of the Country by the Rigors of some Men, his double Ejection, the first out of his Parish, the second out of the Country, made way for his Settlement in *London*, whither he was forced. And such Reasons as these may be given, why many of the *Non-conformists* resort to *London*, and other Towns, which is imputed to them by some as a Fault of Ambition, or worse.

Others, how far soever grown in Years, and desirous of Rest in the Work of Christ, must out of their quiet Quarters, *colligere Sarcinas*, remove their Beds, and be gone, and sell their Books. And what many of them have suffered since, is not my part to aggravate. God hath taken care of many, and given them Food and Raiment, and Work at their Peril and Cost. And others, besides the Hardships of Imprisonments, Chargeableness of many Removes, have lived by their Industry, by their Labours, even of their hands, a very hard and pinching Life, as I doubt not, is very well known to many of all Qualities, and that many Ministers in the Church are very poor. It is not well taken by some, that they should complain of their Sufferings; and may be not well taken from me, to relate what I know and have heard of particular Persons, to whom with their Children, cast Suits have been acceptable, to cover and adorn them.

I know it is objected, that many live better than ever they did; get *Hundreds* per annum, keep *Coaches*, &c.

I answer, I do not think there is any *Non-conformists* in the Land, but will quit what they have for what they had, without seeking Considerations for Losses. 2. If some that can graze upon a bare Common, have a little Flesh, and some Wooll upon their Backs; others have wasted their Patrimonies, and real Estates. 3. It is their Wisdom to set the best Face on't, to shew they are not discouraged in their Conditions, that they may not appear to beg as they go along, to keep themselves from Contempt, and other prudential Considerations. 4. I wish some had better Feet and Legs, than to be carried in Coaches; I am glad they can keep, hire, or borrow, whatever others are.

Others may object the Sufferings of the Royal Party, and many worthy Divines, into whose places many of the now Ejected violently entred.

Answer. *Mercurius Rusticus* saith enough to make a Man's Heart bleed. I would not diminish those Sufferings, by enlarging these; I am sorry for both, for either: But if I may use my Freedom, without offence to any, in this afflicting Point, I humbly offer: 1. It is probable, that many hundreds the now Ejected were not Men in those evil Days, therefore not guilty. 2. There was a Provision of a fifth part for the Wives of the Ejected then; there is none for these. 3. Who can answer for the Violences and Injustice of Actions in a Civil War? Those Sufferings were in a Time of general Calamity, but these were ejected, not only in a Time of Peace, but a Time of Joy to all the Land, and after an Act of Oblivion, when all pretended to be reconciled, and to be made Friends, and to whose common rejoicing these suffering Ministers had contributed their earnest Prayers; and great Endeavours. Many Ministers in the Church are poor, in poor Livings, in poor Curacies, yet are preferred above or equal to their Merits: many are poor through their Prodigality, and superfluous Wigs and Habits. Many Men of worth are kept low, by reason of Pluralities, and Engrossers, that live at ease, that had not a Heart to labour, nor give the Labourers their Hire. These are Grievances that call for Redress.

It is objected, That they suffer through their own Faults, they suffer for Disobedience to a Law.

Answer. I do earnestly interrogate, Can either those that voted for that Bill, or they who used all Power and Art to procure those Votes to pass it into an Act, say from their Consciences, That it was Conscience towards God that obliged them to it; that if they had not put into the old Conformity, the new Additions, they had sinned against Jesus Christ, and their Faithfulness to him? If they can, then I query, if that be not an erroneous Conscience? And then the Question so often thrown upon the *Non-conformists*, of the Obligation of an erring Conscience, may be retorted upon the Imposers, by indifferent judicious Men. If they cannot say so, then they might put the Question to their own Souls, Whether they have not sinned in imposing, or procuring such things to be imposed, as tend to the temporal Hurt and Ruine of many Families, and the great Detriment to the Church of Christ, if not by the Loss of the publick and profitable Labours of many able Ministers, yet by the Divisions that have broken in upon us by these Impositions, and their denying submission to them? It nearly concerns Governors of the Church, to weigh the Necessity of their Impositions, as it doth others to weigh, whether they may act, or refuse to act according to them: For if they rigorously extend their Power beyond the Lines, to the hinderance of the Gospel, they sin against Christ. Caution and Tendernefs must therefore be used. If all these things, and every one of them, be necessary to be enjoined

enjoined and practised, for the Peace, and Union, and Edification of the Church of God, then they condemn their Predecessors of Omission of what was necessary, and contradict what they declare concerning some of these things, that they are alterable, and indifferent in themselves, and may be altered. And if ever any Time since their Imposition might require the Change of them, or laying the Ceremonies aside, that Time when they were anew enjoined, and now when they are required, might excuse it, for many Reasons that are ready at hand.

Again, some say, It is their Fault that they suffer. But who must be Judges of that? Their own Consciences, or they who censure them? They are as confident it was not their Fault, but their Duty, and roundly write, either they *Of this afterwards.* that impose, or they that refuse, sin grievously; and plead their Forbearance as no Sin, but a Duty. O most unhappy Contest and Strait! when either Party must grievously sin against God. Certainly our blessed Law-giver Christ never made such a Law, as tends in the execution of it, to the Hurt of any of his Subjects and Ministers, or to stop the Increase and Progress of the Gospel: And who can justify any particular Law, or Condition of Communion, that is but a Stumbling-block in the way of any, that are past being Babies, and otherwise instructed to his Kingdom?

I conclude with this Observation, That the general Rules of Christ and his Apostles, were given to accommodate the Differences between Jews and Gentiles, to end the Strife, to give ease to the Conscience, silence their uncharitable Censures, and heal their Breaches about things indifferent, and not to determine for one against another, with Penalties. *St. Austin* was grieved to see the Transgression of a Ceremony to be more severely reprehended, than the Transgression of God's Law, &c. saith Reverend Mr. *John Lloyd*, in his *Treatise of Episcopacy*, pag. 53. But this is not a place to dispute. Can any of the Imposers take the Comfort of their own Impositions, and say, they have Peace and Comfort in the things for which learned and holy Men do suffer? Or if it were to do again, I would do no less? Then all I'll say more is this, Then blessed Act of Uniformity! which brings Comfort to them that made or procured it, and to them that suffer by it also! Comfort from the Cause of other Mens great Sufferings, and the great Loss to Souls, must be rare indeed.

Consider these Sufferings of the Ejected. They suffer really in their outward Estates, in their Freedoms, in their Dangers, (being obnoxious to the Canons, as far as to Excommunication, to the Temporal Laws,) in their Names and Honours, as counted disobedient, factious, fanatical, are the Objects of Virulence and Dirt, and are represented as intolerable These.

These are great Sufferings, and a safe way to be redressed, is worthy the Wisdom and Tenderness of Authority. "I am sure, saith the Learned "Dr. *Stillfleet*, it is contrary to the Primitive Practice, and the Moderation then used, to suspend or deprive Men of their Ministerial Functions, for not consenting to Habits, Gestures, and the like. *Iren. p. 64. Rule 4.*

Then next let me consider what the Case is; and if it will appear to be a hard Case, it calls for the more speedy and effectual Relief: And this is the next thing I humbly offer to prove.

II. The Case of the ejected Ministers is really a hard Case.

And I will endeavour the Proof of it in two things.

1. Shewing what is required of them.
2. The Penalties for not doing what is required.

1. The things required of them are either,

1. *Ecclesiastical*.
2. *Political*, and mixed with a Case of Conscience, in the two Declarations they are bound by Law to make.

First; The *Ecclesiastical* Part of their Subscriptions and Declarations; (For brevity sake I will pass the old Conformity.) *They are bound to declare their unfeigned Assent and Consent, &c.*

That this is a heavy Injunction in it self, tho abundance of us have made little of it; for some good Teeth can eat the hardest Crust, but it is Crust for all that. It is hard for any Man,

1. To assent and consent to any thing of another Man's Opinion and Judgment, except first he that gives the Assent have as thoroughly studied, and doth as clearly perceive the things, as he doth that requires the Assent. To assent to some things will not pass in this case, it must be all and every thing. What Parliament-Man will assent to any Bill, except he first be satisfied in the reason of it? &c.

Or, 2. Except he that requires the Assent and Consent, have a degree of Infallibility, or be endowed with an absolute uncontrollable Power, against whom no Scruple, no Objection, or Debate, can or ought to be made.

3. Would not every Practitioner in Physick think it hard, that he must subscribe Assent and Consent to all and every thing contained in, and prescri-

bed by the *London Dispensatory*, and use no other? Would not the Judges in the Courts at *Westminster*, think it hard to declare their Assent and Consent to all and every thing in the Statutes and Laws of *England*, and not endeavour any Alteration? And why is it not hard for us, to subscribe to all and every thing contained in a Book of Divine Worship, not composed by a Divine infallible Spirit? Can more be required to the Scriptures, or clearest Point of Doctrine or Faith?

4. It is hard, as appears by the Qualifications and Mitigations of the Sence of the Declaration. If the Words were clear, and easy for the Understanding and Will to digest, there needed no soft Constructions to help them down. It cost all, that are careful what pass their hands, some thoughts to make them easy. And had it not been for that one word, *Use*, and the help of that, it would have stuck with many, that are as great Pillars of the Church as any in it, in their Stations and degrees. That which is easy and plain, will easily pass with an ordinary Understanding.

The various Constructions of the Forms *Nonconformists* are impartially given by the Reverend Mr. *Baxter*. I shall *Plea for Peace*, not run out to defend either the rigorous or milder p. 158, &c.

Constructions, but shew that the Case of Dissenters is

hard, and indeed of all Conformists, that must take the Words without *Salvo's*, or else must fall under the Censure of Hypocrisy, and doing more Hurt by conforming, than if they had not conformed. It is hard to lay the Stress of many Parts of a Declaration, as fully and distinctly express'd, as the Wit of severe Men could word them, upon one general word, *Use*. It is a hard Construction of affirmative Propositions, or Parts of a positive Declaration, to be explained in a privative or negative Sence; yet so we find them smoothed, and rolled up in Liquorish, that they may pass the narrowest Throats. I shall take the Pains to transcribe

two Constructions, of two excellent Men, which may be taken next to a publick Sence and Construction, especially the one of them, who was the most learned and rarely tempered, Bishop *Reynolds*, in his Sermon of Moderation before the House of Peers, *Novemb. 7. 1666.* a Day of Solemn Humiliation for the Pestilence, *pag. 24.* 'And truly it is an Honour which 'Learned Men owe to one another, to allow Liberty of Dissent in Matters 'of meer Opinion, *salvâ compage Fidei, salvo vinculo Charitatis, salvâ Pace* 'Ecclesie, (for these three, Faith, Love, and Peace, are still to be preserved;) 'so it is a Charity which good Men owe to one another upon the same 'Salvo's, to bear with the Infirmities of each other, not to judg, or despise, or set at naught our Brethren; *as useles and inconsiderable Persons*; 'But whom God is pleased to receive into his Favour, not to cast them out of ours. This Latitude, and Moderation of Judgment, some learned

Men

Men have taken the freedom to extend, even to the Case of Subscriptions by Law required. The learned Author of the Book called, *An Answer to Charity maintained*; and the late learned Primate of Armagh, Arch-Bishop Bramhall; (and quotes their Words in the Margent, which are these) *For the Church of England, I am persuaded, that the constant Doctrine of it is so pure and Orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, undoubtedly shall be saved; and that there is no Error in it, which may necessitate or warrant any Man to disturb the Peace, or renounce the Communion.* This in mine Opinion is all intended by Subscription. — The Words of the Arch-Bishop are these; *We do not suffer any Man to reject the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England at his Pleasure, yet neither do we look upon them as Essentials of saving Faith, or Legacies of Christ and his Apostles; but in a mean, as pious Opinions, fitted for the Preservation of Unity: Neither do we believe any Man to believe them, but only not to contradict them.*

This Sermon being printed upon request of the Lords, I thought this moderate Exposition of Subscription, (as it was aimed at by that rare Preacher, I believe) might pass for approved by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and be next to a legal authentick Sence of all things required by Law: For if Subscription of Articles be in so laxe a Sence, much more to some of the other things. But Mr. Baxter, who hath as good reason to know as any one Man, hath dashed this Conceit; for he writes, that when the Lords would have put in this Proviso, *To the Use of the Book*, the House of Commons refused it, and the Lords acquiesced in their Reasons given in at a Conference about it. *Ubi supra*, p. 160.

The other Expolitor of our Declaration, which I shall produce, is the Reverend Dr. Stillingsfleet, Dean of St. Paul's, who shines as a Star in our Firmament, and in regard of his own great Reason, and Acquaintance with other great Mens thoughts, may direct the Course of fluctuating Coasters, that look for a safe Landing-place, and sure footing, before they proceed in the Service of the Church. In his late controverted Sermon, among other sharp Reflections upon his Friend, Mr. Baxter, he hath these words, *pag. 49. It is a hard Case with a Church, when Men shall set their Wits to strain every thing to the worst Sence, to stretch Laws beyond the Intention and Design of them; to gather together all the doubtful and obscure Passages in Calendars, Translations &c. And will not distinguish betwixt the Approbation of the Use, and of the Choice of things; for upon such Terms as these Men think to justify the present Divisions. I much question, whether if they proceed in such a manner, they can hold Communion with any Church in the Christian World.* So far &c. From which Words I make bold to infer, (and if I am

am too bold, I do seriously ask his pardon.) 1. It seems to me that he limits the sence of the Declaration of *Affent* and *Consent*, to the scope and intention of the Law, which is *to the use* of the Book, and all things in it. 2. That a Man may assent and consent *to the use* of those things; which a Man would not, or doth not *choose*, if left to his choice and liberty. 3. Here is a Blot cast by his Elegant Pen, at least upon some of the things, contained in, and prescribed by the Book, as things not to be chosen, but only to be used by constraint. 4. An Impeachment against the Contrivers and Exacters of Conformity, for requiring Assent and Consent to *all and every thing* (not making a difference) contained in, &c. which such Excellent Men as the Dean is would not use, if left to his choice, nor any other wise man choose; and so their meaning comes to this: I will use this Book, (and all things to be used in it) such as they are, instead of better; and tho not declaring our Assent, is punishable with Deprivation, or Non-Admittance into the Publick Ministry of the Church, and the loss of a Man's Livelihood, and Temporal Rewards of the Ministry. 5. If our Governours shall from their great Wisdom and Compassion to a most divided Church, alter the terms of Communion and Conformity, and unlace the Garment which is made too strait for the Body, which faints, being straitly laced: then no Man must be offended with the Reverend Dean, or any other that conformed in this large sence, if they disuse the things now in use, and fall in with such things as may like them as well or better. 6. I infer, and retort (which is to my purpose) that it is a hard Case with a Church, when Men shall strain their Wits to frame Declarations, under such severe penalties, to passages that are doubtful and obscure, and capable of an ill sence, that we must turn to Kalendars to find out Lessons in the *Apocrypha*, that have Canonical Lessons enow, to use other Translations than the last and best, &c. But Mr. Baxter doth instance in other things, as well as *Kalendars and Translations*, and holds occasional Communion with the Church as it is, and would much rather, if those passages, (which the learned Dean calls *doubtful and obscure*) were not imposed, and is Catholick enough to hold Communion with any Christian Church, that hath not corrupted the Essentials of Christian Worship.

The second Declaration and Subscription contains Matter Political and mixed, which is, *Not to take up Arms, &c.* a thing easily consented to. I do confess that there have been fair Explications and Limitations published to make this gain Assent: but yet it is hard, unless all men could attain to the same sence, and those Explications are not known to abundance that subscribe and declare, and so promise and swear in the dark: I am confident many never read the Covenant that renounce it, and so renounce they know not what; and may take their Informations from the

Pulpit, where a Thread-bare Jingle hath been of late much used by some, of the Holy-League in *France* (to root out the Protestants) and the Solemn League, which must be taken to be as bad as that, being coupled together with it. But that which is hard in these things is, 1. To renounce what many do not know, (and most never took) nor was ever like to be imposed, but to expire with the Men that took it, in the heat of War : [But the Time of the Expiration of this Part draws on.] 2. Not only renounce it our selves, but to declare that no Man else is bound. How can I judg of another Man's Obligation in his *Place and Calling* ? &c. Besides, admit I declare that there lies no Obligation upon any other Man, any more than upon my self, yet it is but my Opinion : I think he is not obliged, but my Opinion doth not absolve or release him that thinks himself obliged, and all this while I do really renounce but for my self. And it is hard for any Man to determine a Case of Conscience, whose Case he doth, it may be, not well understand, and may fail in the stating of it.

But I must not descend into Particulars, neither do I determine against it, but only transiently shew the Excusableness of them who cannot declare these things, (altho they do not refuse it from any Principle of Disloyalty or Faction) and that from this undeniable Consideration and Argument : That which all the Art, and Wit, and Interest of some Men in great Place and Power in the House of Lords, could not make to pass, but was opposed with that Clearness, and Cogency of Reason and Resolution, as if they were saving a Nation, by resisting the Test, which could not pass into a Bill, must needs be hard to be imposed upon Ministers. And it is not improbable, but that noble Opposition gave the greatest Repulse to a dangerous Design, long carried on to subvert the Government, under a Pretence to preserve it as it is, in all its Parts and Circumstances. And the joint Oppolition of some Popish Lords against the Test, doth not at all abate the Strength of this Reason ; for they having a cruel Design, destructive of this Frame, could not chuse but oppose a Test, which was pretended to preserve it unalterably as it is, both in respect of the Persons that govern in the Throne, Church and State, and in its present Constitution. And whereas many things have been carried on, as tho to prevent the coming of such a Year as that unhappy *Forty one* ; yet really there have been great Endeavours used, to bring us under the Obligation which some brought upon us in the Year *Forty* ; I mean the *Et cetera* Oath, leaving out the *Et cetera* it self, and under a colour to preserve us from a Long Parliament of the Complexion of *Forty one*, Protestation, and Covenant, and War, gave Umbrage to a fearful Plot, to bring us under a Papal Slavery, introduced by bloody Massacres. And who talk'd more of *Forty one*, than some that are of late discovered to be Traitors, and having professed to be

Sons of our Church, committed Fornication with *Rome*, who had almost gone out her full Time, ready to be delivered of a Pope, and had called the *Midwife* and many Ladies to the Labour, bespoken Nurses and Gossips, and Choice of Fathers, to *Antichristen* the Monster with the Name of Catholick Church, with all the Ceremonies of the Mass? Some of the eminent *Nonconformists* being willing to declare their detestation of Disloyalty, were taken with the Declaration sent out after the *Oxford Oath*, or *Five-mile Act*, being made believe that that Explication was sent forth by good Authority; yet many smelling what was intended, were resolved to venture their own private loss of Liberty, by asserting the Publick Liberty, and (as things now appear) the Government owes them a kindness; and the Noble Lords and Commons (that understood themselves, and the encreasing Perils) immortal thanks for their seasonable Activity to preserve the strong and ancient Government. But, to conclude this Head, It is not kind, to say no worse, to engage all Ministers, never so young, or else they cannot enter into the Churches Ministry, either to be Politicians, to study State-Affairs, (for which many have been extreemly blamed) or else to be led as Fools, into they know not what. And they that have given this further Test of their Loyalty, have little cause to take it well; as if the standing Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy were not tye sufficient to keep us honest, but dishonour us by a suspicion of Disloyalty and Treachery. Observe the method of proceeding; first they began with us, as Guides of the People; and next proceeded to draw in Corporations, and from thence to impose it upon the Parliament it self; to which if they had submitted, we see what would have followed, We might have seen such Commissioned by the King's own Authority, as would have destroyed His Person, and cut all our Throats, having first tied our Hands. Thus I have shewed what is required from them. The second Particular follows.

See the Commons Answer to his Majesties Message about Tangier.

II. Consider the Penalties to be inflicted upon such as will not conform.

1. They who were in the Ministry must be divorced from those, whom they had baptized, and espoused to Christ, among whom they had laboured; and their remove was to the shaking of many Christians, and to the great harm of the Church. I will instance only these three ways. First, it was as bad to many, as the change of a Nurse to a weakly Child. (I will ask no Pardon for the Comparison, it being Apostolical.) 2dly, It was enough to make many stagger, and call in question all those Truths that had bin delivered to them, since that their Preachers are judged unfit to be continued in Trust with Souls: and tended to breed much Atheism, and ma-

ny Errors. 3dly, It tended to alienate the minds of many from the Government of the Church, that would enforce Laws binding to many unnecessary things, even to the Ejection and Deprivation of many Orthodox and painful Divines. And this sticks with many to this day; by which the Church-Rulers have not got, but lost. And these things aggravated with an imputation of Dishonesty in Ministers, by the publication of their Assent, &c. in the full Congregation. For if any had distinguished between the substance of Ordinances, and Accidentals, which was but necessary to many people, (who thought no Worship Divine without the Common-Prayer, (as I my self have known) nor any Child rightly baptized without the Cross) yet by this Act of Uniformity. they must declare Assent and Consent to all and every thing, to Cross

See also Mr. Blake, Covenant sealed. p. 308.

as well as Baptism, to Ceremony as well as Substance. And how easie was it for sinful people and weak, to say, See what these Men can do — Yea, in case that in any after-time, wise and moderate Governours should see a necessity of making Alterations: Then again, teaching Scorners to say, Yea, see what these Men can do — to the great dishonour of Religion, and disgrace of the best of Ministers. And one would think that because the Courts continue to swear Churchwardens to present, they had Spies enow upon our *Nonconformists*, and Punishments smart enough, they might have spared. to require this Declaration; or, if they had thought us honest, our promise to conform had been sufficient, tho kept in the Registers, and made at our Institutions. Yet through this Dishonour we attain our Honour. They are debarred from all exercise of their Ministerial Abilities, their Wives and Children turned out of doors; and when they had made a sad and chargeable Remove of late, must remove again upon the Five-mile Act. And these Penalties were next to Death, and I conceive proved the Death of many. I remember the Renowned Bishop *Morton* wrote these words to the *Nonconformists*, and desired them earnestly to consider the Censure of the Apostle's *Wo* being so dreadful: "I ought not to esteem any thing a just Cause, why I should wilfully incur the Censure of

The General Defence of the three Ceremonies. Part. 1. p. 163.

"Silencing my self from Preaching, for which I ought not as willingly to adventure my Life. The *Nonconformists* have suffered what is next to Death, and too many have suffered even unto Death, in Prisons, where several caught their Death, and others died: (it is a dreadful story) of whom shall their Deaths be required? And it is easie to retort those words of the Reverend Bishop, "Imposers should not esteem any thing a just Cause of bringing any under the censures of "Silencing of Preachers from preaching, for which they may not adventure to take away their Lives.

It is objected, *That they sin against the Law.* And they may answer, *Who procured the Law?* it is the Magistrate's Sword, but who moved him to draw it? They are told they have no cause to complain of Sufferings, for the Magistrate hath been merciful, and hath not executed the Laws.

Thanks be to God for the Mercy: but all have not been so merciful as the King hath been, or many inferior Magistrates; but their Mercy hath not been kindly taken by many, who should have more tender bowels than any Man that wears a Sword. To conclude; A reasonable Understanding may judge that Law not fit to remain in force, that is not fit to be put in execution. That Law cannot be good, that is not fit to be brought to act, without more real hurt than good. And if the wise and merciful God hath by many remarkable Providences put a stop to their execution, it is time for Men to annul the Law.

2. The Penalty is hard upon them that make their offers to be admitted into the Churches Service, or that would come in but for these Injunctions. It is but a narrow passage that is made for them that enter in: yet what shall they do who have spent all they have in a Preparatory Education? In they must, tho but to a Curacy, (which is not easie to be had.) It is grievous to think with what Implicit Faith they do what is to be done; yet must Assent to more than ever many have studied, [rather following Example than Reason] or else there is nothing for them to do. Others that are inclin'd to Learning, and to serve in the Gospel, are deterred upon many accounts, and have great prejudices against Conformity, because of the great reverence they have to *Nonconformists*; and these are under a great temptation to perpetuate a Nonconformity: which is more sutable to their inclinations, as being a state of freedom to their Consciences, from great Bonds and Obligations, tho an Estate attended with hazard to their Bodies and Estates. And all young Students are under this necessity, either they must subscribe hand-over-head, or else they must spend their time in these endless Controversies of the Church, and be engaged in the dolefull and fearfull Wars of the Church, on one side or other.

3. The third Consideration that pleads for our *Non-conforming Brethren*, is taken from the Reasonableness of their Demands. I distinguish these Demands, into those Proposals made by the Commissioners in the *Savoy*, Anno 1662, with that Modesty, Gravity, Humility and Reason, treating the Bishops and other Commissioners as Superiours. 2. Into those which have been repeated by particular Persons, and may be seen in the Writings of Laborious and Catholick Mr. Baxter, Mr. John Corbet, and Dr. Owen in his learned and moderate Book of Church-Peace, Love, and Unity. I shall only generally compare what they humbly desired, with what was declared;

1. In his Majesties gracious Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs : a most large and healing Plaister for the Churches Wounds ; and might have been a Pillar to have born up the Church in Unity, as his Gracious *Act of Indemnity and Oblivion* hath held up the State ; if some Men, who can be loyal for their own ends, had not (perhaps) bin industrious to make Divisions by their Affected Terms of Union.

2. They humbly moved, but for what great Men, and famous in the Church of God to all posterity thought fit to grant. In that Year 1641, there was a Committee for Religion appointed in the House of Lords, ten Earls, ten Bishops, ten Barons. The Bishop of *Lincoln (Williams)* sent a

Letter to some Divines to attend that Service (who met *Breviat of his* in his House, the Deanery of *Westminster*) upon which *Life.* p. 24. Arch-Bishop *Laud* hath this Note : " Upon the whole
" matter, I believe this Committee will prove the Nation-
" al Synod of *England*, to the great dishonour of the Church : and what
" else may follow upon it God knows.

These Divines were no less Men, than the most Venerable Arch-Bishop *Usher*, Bishop (*Williams*) of *Lincoln*, Dr. *Prideaux* (after Bishop of *Worcester*) Dr. *Brownrig* (after Bishop of *Exeter*) Dr. *Ward* (Professor of Divinity in *Cambridge*, and Arch-Deacon of *Taunton*) Dr. *Featly*, Dr. *Hacket*, of late Bishop of *Coventry* and *Litchfield*. All these subscribed a Paper called, *The Proceedings, &c. touching Innovations in Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England ; together with Considerations upon the Common-Prayer Book*. Out of which I draw a Parallel, with the Proposals of the Divines appointed to treat by his Majesty's Commission, with the Archbishop and Bishops, and other Divines of the Church of *England*, at the *Savoy*. [See Account of the Proceedings, printed *Lond.* 1661.]

*The Divines appointed to meet in the
Dean's House, 1641.*

Considerations on the Common-Prayer.

2. Whether the Reading of *Psalms*, Sentences of Scripture, concurring in divers places in Hymns, the *Epistles* and *Gospels*, should not be set out in the New Translation ?

4. Whether Lessons of Canonical Scripture should not be put in the Kalendar instead of the *Apocrypha* ?

5. That

*The Commissioners in the Savoy,
1661.*

In regard of the many defects which have been observed in that Version of the Scriptures which is used throughout the Liturgy, -- We therefore desire in stead thereof the New Translation allowed by Authority, may alone be used. 8. p. 5.
—9. It is therefore desired that nothing may be read in the Church for Lessons but the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Except-

5. That the *Doxologie* should be always printed at the end of the Lord's Prayer.

6. Whether the *Rubrick* should not be mended, where it is, (that the Lessons should be sung in a plain Tune) why not, read with a distinct Voice?

7. Whether *Gloria Patri* should be repeated at the end of every *Psalm*?

Consider. 9. Whether the *Hymns*, *Benedicite*, *Omnia Opera*, &c. may not be left out?

3. Whether the *Rubrick* should not be mended, where all Vestments in time of Divine Service, are now commanded, which were used 2. E. 6.

10. In the Prayer for the Clergy that phrase perhaps to be altered, [*which only worketh great marvels.*]

11. In the *Rubrick* for the Administration of the Lord's Supper. Whether this Alteration to be made, that such as intend to Communicate, shall signify their Names to the Curat over Night, or in the Morning before Prayers.

12. The next *Rubrick* to be cleared, How far a Minister may repulse a scandalous and notorious Sinner from the Communion.

Exception 3. We desire that the words, *For thine is the Kingdom* — may be always added to the Lord's Prayer.

Except. p. 13. The Lessons, and Epistles, and Gospels, being for the most part neither *Psalms* nor *Hymns*, we know no Warrant why they should be sung in any place; and conceive that the distinct reading of them with an audible Voice, tends more to the edification of the Church.

Except. We desire it may be used but once in the Morning, and once in the Evening.

Except. We desire that some *Psalm* or *Scripture-Hymn*, may be appointed instead of that *Apocryphal*.

Except. We desire it may be left out.

The Prefaces of many *Collects* seem not to have any clear and special respect to the Petitions, &c. *Partic. p. 7.*

In the Order for the Lord's Supper. *Except.* The time here assigned (in the *Rubrick*) for notice to be given to the Minister, is not sufficient.

Except. We desire the Ministers power, both to admit and repulse from the Lord's Table, may be, according to his Majesty's Declaration, *Octob. 25. 1660.*

13. Whether that *Rubrick* is not to be mended, where the Churchwardens are straitly appointed to gather the Alms for the Poor, before the Communion begins, for by experience it is proved to be done better when the people depart.

14. Whether the *Rubrick* is not to be mended, concerning the party that is to make his general Confession upon his Knees, before the Communion, that it should be said only by the Minister, and then at every clause repeated to the people.

16. Whether it be not fit to insert a *Rubrick* touching kneeling at the Communion; that is, to comply in all humility with the Prayer which the Minister makes when he delivers the Elements.

19. Whether in the first Prayer at the Baptism, these words, *Didst sanctify the Flood Jordan, and all other Waters,* should not be thus changed, *Didst sanctify the Element of Water?*

20. Whether it be not fit to have some discreet *Rubrick* made to take away all Scandal from signifying the Sign of the Cross upon the Infants after Baptism, or if it shall seem more expedient, to be quite disused; whether this Reason should be published, that in Ancient Liturgies, *No Cross* was consigned upon the Party, but where Oil also was used; and therefore Oil being now omitted, so may also that which was concomitant with it, the *Sign of the Cross*.

Except Collections for the Poor may be better made at, or a little before the departure of the Communicants.

We desire it may be made by the Minister only.

We desire that the following *Rubrick* in the *Common-Prayer Book* of 5. of *Edw. 6.* may be restored, for the Vindication of the Church, in the matter of kneeling at the Sacrament, &c.

It being doubtful whether either the Flood *Jordan*, or any other Waters, were sanctified to a Sacramental use by our Saviour's being baptized:— We desire this may be otherwise expressed.

18. *General Proposal.* After strong arguing, they conclude, We therefore most earnestly entreat the right reverend Fathers and Brethren, to whom these Papers are delivered, as they tender the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion, the Peace of the Church, the Service of his Majesty, in the accomplishment of that happy Union, which his Majesty hath so abundantly testified his Desires of, to join with us in importuning his most Excellent Majesty, that his most gracious Indulgence, as

21. In private Baptism, the Rubrick mentions that which must not be done, That *the Minister may dip the Child in Water, being at the point of Death.*

22. Whether in the last Rubrick of Confirmation those words be to be left out, [*and be undoubtedly saved.*]

23. Whether the Catechism may not receive a little more enlargement.

to these Ceremonies granted in his Royal Declaration, may be continued and confirmed to us and our Posterities, and extended to such as do not yet enjoy the Benefit thereof. —

Of Private Baptism.

We desire that Baptism may not be in a private place at any time, unless by a lawful Minister, and in the presence of a competent number; and where it is evident that any Child hath been so baptized, no part of the Administration may be reiterated in publick under any limitations, and therefore we do not see any need of any Liturgy in that Case.

Exception of Confirmation.

Altho we charitably suppose the meaning of these words was only to exclude the necessity of any other Sacraments to baptized Infants; yet these words are dangerous, as to the misleading of the Vulgar, and therefore we desire they may be expunged.

Except. of the Catechism.

We desire the first Question may be altered, considering for 20 Years past, many had no God-fathers; and and the 7th Q. The second Answ. Wherein I was visibly admitted into the number of the Members of Christ. That the Commandments may be inserted according to the last Translation of the Bible. That in the Exposition of the Commandments, some clause may be inserted to refer

to the fourth Commandment, that those words be omitted. Answer, thus given, Two only, *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, &c. A more full Explication of the *Creed*, *Lord's Prayer*, and *Ten Commandments*, &c.

E

24. Whether

24. Whether the *Tim s* prohibited for Marriage are quite to be taken away?

25. Whether none hereafter shall have Licenses to Marry, nor be asked their Banes of Matrimony, that shall not bring with them a Certificate from their Ministers, that they are instructed in their Catechism.

26. Whether these words in Matrimony [*with my Body I thee worship*] shall not be thus altered, *I give thee power over my Body*?

27. Whether the last *Rubrick* of Marriage should not be mended, that the new married Persons should receive the Communion the same day of the Marriage, may it not well be; or upon the next *Sunday* following, when the Communion is celebrated?

28. In the Absolution of the Sick, were it not plain, to say, *I pronounce thee Absolved*.

29. The *Psalms* of Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth, Were it not fit to be composed out of proper Versicles taken from divers *Psalms*?

Except. of the Form of Marriage.

The word *Worship*, being much altered in the use of it, since this Form was drawn up, we desire some word may be used instead of it.

This *Rubrick* doth either enforce all to forbear Marriage as are unfit for the Sacrament, or the unprepared to come to the Sacrament. And therefore we desire it may be omitted, the rather because that Marriage Festivals are too often accompanied with such divertisements, as are unsuitable to those Christian Duties which ought to be before, and follow after the receiving of that Holy Sacrament.

Except. Visitation of the Sick.

That form of Absolution be declarative and conditional, as [*I pronounce thee Absolved*] instead of [*I absolve thee*] if thou dost truly repent and believe.

This *Psalms* (121) seems not to be so pertinent as some other, *viz.* *Psal.* 113. & *Psal.* 128.—

32. In the Order of the Burial of all Persons, 'tis said, *We commit this Body to the Ground, in sure and certain hope of Resurrection to eternal Life* : Why not thus, Knowing assuredly that the Dead shall rise again.

34. In the Litany, instead of *Fornication, and all other deadly Sin* ; Would it not satisfy thus, From Fornication, and all other grievous Sins.

35. It is very fit that the Imperfections of the Meeter, in the Singing *Psalms* should be mended ; and then lawful Authority added unto them, to have them publicly sung before and after Sermons, and sometimes instead of the Hymns of Morning and Evening Prayer.

Except. Burial of the Dead.

These words cannot in truth be said of Persons living and dying in open and notorious Sins.

Except. in the Litany.

In regard that the Wages of Sin is Death ; We desire that this clause may be thus altered, *From Fornication, and all other heinous or grievous Sins.*

Gen. Proposition, 12. p. 6.

Because singing of *Psalms* is a considerable part of publick Worship, We desire that the Version set forth and allowed to be sung in Churches, may be amended, or that we may have leave to make use of a purer Version.

I shall not draw the Parallel any further, but infer these following Observations.

1. That those great and famous Men did see some necessity or reason for altering of many things in the Liturgy ; and therefore the Presbyterian Divines, (most of whom were and are *Non-Conformists*) were not altogether captious and quarrellous, they maintain'd a Necessity of Reformation. On the other side, there were learned Men who maintained there was no necessity of Reformation. But you see, against the sense of those admirable Divines that met in the Dean's House, 1641.

2. I observe, That the Proposals and Exceptions of the Commissioners in the *Savoy*, were not without great President ; and insisted upon many things, which the most eminent Fathers of the Church of *England* would have yielded to them, and doubtless much more, if not all, for Peace and Union.

3. To speak a word for the reproached Brethren of the *Non-conformists*, (who are represented to have all the ill Humours of factious Persons, and discontented, that know not what to ask, nor what they would have) is but a piece of Justice and Christian Charity. Men think nothing but Presbytery, and Covenants, and Directory, will please them ; which is not just

nor true. They desired that the Liturgy may consist of nothing doubtful or questioned amongst pious, Orthodox, Learned Men, &c. Dr. Allen of *Huntingdon-shire*, and Clerk in the Convocation, did earnestly labour with the then Bishop of *London*, (afterward Arch-Bishop) that they might so refine the Liturgy, that no sober Man might make Exception. He was wished to forbear, for what should be, was concluded on or resolved. They desired, the observation of *Saints Days* might be omitted, &c. The most Reverend *Usher*, and the rest, begin their Considerations with this; *Whether the Names of some departed Saints, and others, should not be quite expunged the Kalender?* They desired that there might be no such Imposition of the Liturgy, as that the Exercise of the Gift of Prayer be thereby totally excluded, in any part of publick Worship. The most excellent *Usher*, (p. 5. §. 16.) and the rest, reckon it among the Innovations; 'By prohibiting a direct Prayer before Sermon, and bidding of Prayer, (which is now the mode all over the Bishoprick of *Duresm*, as some that are no strangers in it say.)

They at the *Savoy* stood for a Reformation, and were not singular therein; for without it, the Reverend Dr. *Featly*, (a worthy Man, and great Sufferer in our unhappy Warrs, which is like the Sword that makes no difference) printed this Challenge and Manifesto.

1. 'The Articles of Religion need no Alteration at all, but only an 'Orthodox Explication in some ambiguous Phrases, and a vindication against false Aspersions.
2. 'That the Government by Bishops (*removing all Innovations and Abuses in the execution thereof*) is agreeable to God's Word, and a truly Ancient, and Apostolical Institution.
3. 'That the Book of *Common Prayer* (N. B. the *Kalendar* being reformed, in point of *Apocryphal Saints* and Chapters; some Rubricks explained, and some Expressions revised, and the whole correctly printed, with all the Psalms, Chapters, and Allegations out of the Old and New Testament, according to the last Translation) is the most compleat, perfect, and exact Liturgy in the Christian World. *Dippers Dipt*, p. 16, 22. and *Gentle Last*, 1644.

And this is the same in effect with what the Divines at the *Savoy* humbly proposed; and without all these Exceptions, that Champion, Dr. *Featly*, would not undertake his Vindication of them: by which it seems the first of the Church-Constitution and Discipline was not tenable as it stood at that time; but our great Church-men were resolved, that the World should know their Strength, as well as Reason, to regain with advantage in 1661, what they lost in 1641.

The Presbyterian Divines (as they were called) did urge, both rationally, heartily, and humbly, that the Ceremonies might be omitted, being doubtful whether the Church had power to enjoin mystical teaching Signs (which the Imposers confessed indifferent) of no real goodness, &c. which many of the Opposers accounted sinful, others inconvenient, and unsuitable to the simplicity of the Gospel; and had been, for a hundred Years, the Fountain of manifold Evils, &c. And herein they were not singular; for other Men, when disengaged, and Masters of their Liberty, have said as much, or enough to take off the edg, from Imposers to require them, or of wise Men to desire them. I shall here produce the Judgment of some learned and judicious Conforming Divines, concerning Ceremonies. The first shall be the most eminent Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in that excellent *Irenicum*, the first born of his most learned Youth, and mature Reason and Judgment; and had it been the Work of his Age, it had been a Birth at full growth, in respect of Piety, Gravity, sweetness of Temper, beauty of Complexion, wise Observations and Experience, that, and *Author of the Irenicum*, had filled up the Epitaph of the Dean of *St. Pauls*. This is the last Proposal of Accommodation; 'That Religion be not clogg'd with Ceremonies.—Christian Religion is a plain, simple, easy thing.—By Ceremonies I do not mean here Matters of meer Decency and Order, for Order-sake.—But Ceremonies properly taken for *Actions significative*, their lawfulness may with better grounds be scrupled, *pag. 67*. And before, *pag. 66*. We see the Primitive Church did not make so much of any uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies.—I shall quote too much, if I give way to what is mature, and past his own mending, without disparagement to his more grown Reason be it spoken.

The second is a great Scholar and Divine, the late worthy Mr. *G. Lawson*, (Rector of *Moor in Shropshire*) in his Exposition of the Second Commandment, *Theopolitica*, B. 2. c. 8. 'As for significant Ceremonies, annexed to the Service of God, no ways conducing to the better performance thereof, I think they are better spared and omitted, than used and observed. For tho considered in themselves, without any reference to God's Worship, they be indifferent, and so in general may be lawful; yet if we examine their Original, the first occasion of their Institution; the Persons who use, or rather abuse them, and understand withal how needless and unprofitable they be, and how offensive to some weak Brethren; and also besides these may be instituted many more of that kind, and may be imposed upon the same ground; and that in the Church of *Rome* they have been an occasion of Superstition: it must needs be included, by impartial and judicious Men, that they are not expedient. To say, and publicly declare that they have no sanctifying Power, that they are
'neither

neither Holy nor Unholy, will not serve the turn: for the same may be said of Images, at first, when they began to be used; and do what we can, many of the People do account them to be Holy, make them parts of God's Worship, and are more careful in the observation of them, than they are of the more weighty Duties of Religion. — [Doctrine in this case will not prevail, if the thing that they trusted to, be not taken from them. *Calfhill* of the Cross, again *Martial*, p 88.] 'So it may be, bating the degrees of Offence, when Matters of Indifferency in themselves, are, by the generality of People not looked on as such, but used as a necessary part of Divine Service. *Dr. Stilling. Iren.* p. 64. They who industriously labour to keep out Popery, can never cleanse a People from Superstitions, while they keep up Ceremonies, an observation of present use.

My third Testimony is, a Man of great Learning, and of long standing in the Church, Mr. *John Lloyd B. D.* now of *North Tidworth* in *Wilts.* *Treat. of Episc. Liturg. Rites, &c. Lond. 1660.* 'Many have entertained a great fear, which hath alienated their Minds from all Episcopacy; namely, that innumerable company of unnecessary and burdensome Ceremonies be inseparable Concomitants of Episcopal Government. Indeed the fear is not vain, and without grounds, if we respect the degenerate Episcopacy, as it is, if we regard the Primitive, which hath been, and will be contented with a very few, if need be. — p. 32. S. 15 (the whole Section gives a short and full account of Primitive Simplicity). One Reason why Ceremonies increased in the fourth Century, may be this, Because the Church more flourished in prosperity than at any time before, and might be thought convenient, that the External Glory of the Church, should be proportioned to the Glory of the Empire. p. 38. We may err, as in defect, so in excess of Ceremonies, or in the choice, or in accounting and compelling others to own them for unchangeable Apostolick Institutes, or by too rigid pressing of every of them, especially upon People of weak Capacity, humble, peaceable, and scrupulous Conscience. — Antiquity is venerable, yet it may not, ought not continue a Rite or Ceremony in any Church, with whose Edification and Peace it is become inconsistent. There be but few Ordinances merely Ecclesiastical, which have not in some Churches become noxious, or at least useless. And there is a vicissitude of Profit or Detriment growing from them in the same Churches, arising from notable changes in Persons and Circumstances. — If it should seem good to the Church of England to mend their *Liturgie*, or compose a new one, (if need be) more agreeable to the present Time, they should do therein no more than the most famous Churches have done before; and which can be no disparagement

'ragement to the Wisdom and Piety of the Composers of it, which intended only to make it as fit as could be for the state of the Church in their time, and not to frame and impose an Unchangeable Form, which could never prove incongruous to any possible variety in the state of the Church; for this is not in the power of any persons or Churches. P. 54, 55. Thus far this great Student, modest, moderate good Man.

I will content my self with the Opinions of these three worthy Persons, when disengaged; and altho they conformed, they were and are no doubt of the same mind, free in their minds, when obliged in their practice to submit.

What more than what I have shewed, the Commissioners at the Savoy pleaded for, may be seen in the Account of their Proceedings: But what got they by those Debates besides satisfaction in their own Souls, that they debated and petitioned for Peace? A very little indeed! And what the Bishops gave with the one hand, they got with the other. It was strange and hard that they could not prevail so far as to get the *Commandments* in the Church-Catechism & Communion-Service to be after the last and best Translation in our Bibles; but our Children must be taught the 4th Commandment after the manner of the Judaizing Seventh-day-Sabbath Sect; for so they are taught, *Wherefore he blessed the [Seventh day] and hallowed it;* and our unwary People are taught to pray, that God would *encline their hearts to keep this Law*, that Law which enjoineth the Seventh-day as the Sabbath, which God blessed and hallowed: whereas the Law, *Remember the Sabbath day*, which extends to the *First day*, as well as the *Seventh day*, and makes the First day moral, when appointed by the Lord of the Sabbath, (But this Doctrine was not consonant to the Opinions of Dr. Heylin, Mr. Thorndike, nor (which I wonder at) to the judicious Bp. Sanderson) as much as the Seventh was from the Creation. What if an inquiring Child that is catechised, should ask his Parent, What day do we keep as Sabbath? the First hee'l say.

Hist. of the Sabbath. Just Weights & Measures. Case of the Sabbath.

But saith the Child, Why do we keep the First? what Commandment for that? or what Promise? for we are taught in the Catechism, *God blessed the Seventh day*. Is not this a temptation to keep the Seventh-day Sabbath? Had the *Presbyterians* pleaded for that Translation, they might have heard of their ignorance in the Hebrew: and demanding things not fit to be allowed, they would not grant them, lest they (as the *Puritans* have been misrepresented) should Judaize in keeping the Holy Sabbath.

The *Doxologie*, or conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, [*for thine is the Kingdom, &c.*] to be used always.

Query.

Query. Whether they have not thereby taught us this Opinion, that the Forms of Prayers are lawful, yet a variety is as lawful as a set form of words.

We prove the lawfulness by our Saviour's Prescription, *When ye pray, say, &c.* And may we not prove a liberty, or a variety of expressions, keeping still to the same matter, when we read a difference in the same Prayer as delivered by two Evangelists, inspired by the same Spirit? and when we see the practice of the Church is sometimes to use, and sometimes to omit the *Doxologie* and Conclusion? And why shall the Church so severely enjoin the exact use of all her Forms, and they who omit, (when their Prudence and Conscience (as to some Prayers) tells them they should sometimes concerning some Petitions and Persons) are liable to censure, when a part of the Lord's Prayer, as delivered by St. *Matthew*, is constantly omitted? For ought I see, a liberty and variety of Prayers, strictly keeping to divine matter, with abbreviations and enlargements, is as lawful as a stinted invariable Form of words, and is a matter of Christian Liberty, to be used as shall best serve to the edification of the Church of Christ: and divers expressions are as much from the same Spirit (provided always they agree with the language of the Holy Ghost) as diversities of Gifts, and consistent with the Unity of the Spirit. And they who plead for a necessity of Forms, must also yeeld to a variety upon the same subject, which we have for the King in the Service, and a few others.

A Reformation was thought absolutely necessary to Union. Hear what *Mr. Herbert Thorndike*, one of the Commissioners for the Church in the *Savoy*, wrote; 'But now that Unity is not to be had, without settling agreement in matters of Difference; to propose what may seem best for the Community of God's Church, in the Cure of our Breaches, is not to give offence, but to take it away. Nor do I know any Man professing the Reformation sincerely, that could not wish with all his heart, that the whole Order and Form to be settled, with the Circumstance of the same, might be according to the Primitive Simplicity, and naked plainness of the Ancient Church. p. 245. — The form of Service now in force by Law, may be acknowledged capable of Amendment without disparagement either to the Wisdom of the Church that prescribed it, or of the Nation that enacted it.

Some promised much, but granted little; others begg'd more, & pleaded hard, but obtained not. And may not this justify the *Nonconformists* waiting for, and earnestly desiring a redress of material things, since they could obtain but very little then, and cannot in conscience subscribe and declare now? If they had been gratified then, and had now been discontented without more

more, there had been more reason for the prejudice that is propagated against them.

If it be objected, *Why could not they have Conformed, as some of their Fellow-Commissioners did?*

I Answer; 1. Some very worthy Persons did Conform, *Dr. Wallis, Dr. Horton, Dr. Lightfoot*; and after about seven Years silence, to the great loss of *Exeter College, Oxford*, and the Church of God, *Dr. Conant* conformed, and these were all.

2. The Reasons why these did not, is, because, as the same Spectacles will not serve all Mens sight, so because they could not, as they oft declared, both to the shaking off some, and the displeasure of others within the Pale.

My last Observation shall be upon the Persons that managed that Debate. The Commissioners that pleaded for the Union as it was, without a Reformation, were the strongest and stiffest of any in the Church of *England*. Men of great Learning, long experience in the Ecclesiastical Government, and that had suffered much, and were much exasperated, as being (several of them next the Bishops) most obnoxious to the Parliament, as most guilty of Innovations in Doctrine and Discipline, by the Informations and Complaint of as Learned, and as great Men as any of them in the Church of *England*, as may easily be produced out of the best account of those Times; all except *Dr. Morley, Dr. Earle, Dr. Sanderfon*, (against whom I remember no Complaints) and a few beside. Their Constancy and Sufferings, did recommend them to the King's Favour; and the great Agreement in their Persuasions, held them to one another; and having the disposing of Preferments as they pleased, or at least the Recommendation of Candidates, Expectants complied with them, and were forward to walk according to their Measures. The moderating Bishop *Hall* was gone to Heaven; *Prideaux, Brownrig*, and others of another temper, and so it was easier for them to carry all their own way: and two things, as conducing to their designs, was necessary;

1. To frame a Convocation to their minds, and to that end, great care and pains were used to keep out, and to get in, by very undue Proceedings. Protestations were entred against all Incumbents not ordained by Bishops, though it was not through their faults; and to exclude others, that they feared had any inclination to Moderation indeed, under the name of *Presbytery*. And such an Election being made, as there was a great fear of calling any thing to free Debates, few leading Men being of another mind, so there were no Debates to speak of; the greatest that I could hear of, was between the *Cambridg* Professor *Dr. Gunning*, and the *Oxford* Professor *Dr. Creed*, about (a hard Point indeed) *the Age of Children to be Confirmed*.

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2. For all his Majesty's most gracious and excellent Declaration, concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs, they laboured, by all their Interest and Endeavours, to have a Parliament that would pass what they would contrive and prepare for them. And so they, instead of sending more Labourers into the Vineyard, hired (as some say) Labourers to turn out, or keep out Labourers from entering in. And the Labourers in Pension were not employed only in State, but also in Church-Work. Their Interest was so great in that Parliament, as to enact what was reckoned an Innovation in some Colleges in both Universities (by the above-named Bishop *Brownrig*, and *Prideaux*, &c. in these words, 'By introdu-

Copy of the Proceedings, &c. 1641. Innovation 17.

'cing Latin Service in the Communion of late in *Oxford*, and into some Colleges in *Cambridg* at 'Morning and Evening Prayer; so that some 'young Students and Servants in the Colleges do 'not understand their Prayers. But now the Latin Service may be used in any College, or Hall, in *Oxford*, *Cambridg*, *Westminster*, *Winchester*, and *Eaton*, and Convocation of Clerks.

Dr. Tuckney, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Conant, Horton, Lightfoot, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Woodbridg, Dr. Seaman, Dr. Spurstow, Jacomb, Bates, &c. and Bishop Reynolds on this side.

Bp S. at Stony-Stratford in Bucks.

The Commissioners on the other side, must be acknowledged Men of great and sound Learning, and of more experience in the Pastoral Office, and had conversed more with great Congregations than the others had, and so were more fit to Advise; as learned Practitioners in Physick are fitter to Advise, and more likely to hit the Temper of the Patient, than a Professor in the Theory. And the account of their Proceedings will to Posterity shew to the impartial and inquisitive, both their Parts and their Temper. When I read them, I do the less wonder at what I heard, that a great Bishop in his prime Visitation, soon after, did teach his Clergy against reading that Book.

Thus was the Platform of the present Constitution drawn, and it stands leaning altogether to the one side, and what wonder, that many that seem wholly to lean upon it, do cry, *It falls, it falls*, that was not laid upon a larger Foundation. But how did these Master-Builders proceed in the Government of their New-Reformed Church? It seemed to be built no larger than to contain one Family, the genuine Sons of such Fathers; there was but one narrow Door of admission to it, a strong Lock upon it, and the sole Power of the Keys was in trusty Hands, and the Sword in the hand of a Friend, there was no outward Apartment in it to entertain Strangers, or belonging to it: But some got a false Key to the Door, as many call it,

a Key of a larger sense; and when some got in, more crouded in; and so the *Latitudinarian* in Charity, came in with the *Latitudinarian* in Discipline, to the no little grief of some who do not like their company. The Fathers keep above Stairs, and now and then come down among us, and send their Officers to visit us, and have their Watch renewed every Year to tell Tales of us; and they that are without Doors, cry, If there be any Love in our Governors to Christ, and his divided Flock, that we would but widen the Door, and reform but ill Customs; but we say, we cannot help our selves or them, for the Law will have it so. The Law had a two-edged Sword of Penalties, and some of them who took Sword to guard and assist the Church, having spent their heat, grew for the most part cold and lazy; and more Dissenters were smitten with the Key, than the Sword: And so nothing almost went on currantly and vigorously, for more got into the Communion than some would have, and so many kept out, that there were too many to be dealt with. Several of the Bishops having made work for others, and having their Wills, grew very gentle. I begin within mine own Knowledge, or good Information. I shall not need to speak of Bishops, *Monk* and *Gauden*, nor of *Reynolds*, who carried the Wounds of the Church (in his Heart and Bowels) to his Grave with him, as is well known to many that knew him: but speak of the most rigorous at first hand. Doctor *Laney*, first Bishop of *Peterborough*; who had made a great bussle in the croud of aspiring Men in *Cambridg*, till he came up several Stories, as high as he desired to be, was very moderate in his Government. In his prime Visitation, (as I have heard one speak that was by) before *Bartholomew*, he in his Chamber told some of his Clergy what he came about; and as tho he would wipe his Hands, said, *ἐν ἐργῶ ἁλλὰ νόμος*; Not I, but the Law; and could (to use his own phrase to a scrupulous Person) look through his Fingers, and suffer a worthy *Non-conformist* to preach publicly very near him, for some Years together, after his remove to another Bishoprick.

Bishop *Saunderson* was severe, and troubled long with a sharp Disease, which might exasperate his Mind, had a Roll of Ministers under his angry Eye, designed for Discipline; but when he drew nigh to his latter End, he commanded that Roll to be burnt, and said, He would die in Peace.

Dr. Earle Bishop of *Salisbury*, was a Man that could do Good against Evil; forgive much, and of a charitable Heart, and died, to the no great sorrow of them, who reckoned his Death was just, for labouring all his might against the *Oxford Five-mile Act*.

But most remarkable is that Passage in the last Testament, printed both in *English* and *Latin*, of the Learned Dr. *Cosins* Bishop of *Duresm*, printed

with his Funeral Sermon and Life. He leaves a Mark upon the Presbyterian, to satisfy us that he was none, but tells the Church, That our great and main Work is, to Unite. The Passage deserves Transcribing, *viz.* pag. 126. 'I take it to be my Duty, and of all my Brethren, especially the *Bishops*, and Ministers of the Church of God, to do our *utmost endeavours*, according to the Measure of Grace which is given to every one of 'Us, that at last an *End* may be put to the Differences of Religion, or at least they may be lessened, &c.

How others of their Order, that are dead, and alive, that managed that Affair, for the standing or shaking of this Church, have carried themselves in Debates, and great Trials, is better known to others than to me. Only I will crave leave to say, That one at that time but Doctor, hath not consulted the quiet of peaceable considering Men, by provoking Mr. *Baxter* to shew Reasons of his Nonconformity, which are too hard for many to answer, and unanswered yet. And it is to no purpose to set R. against B. and *Baxter* against *Baxter*, as if none could answer him till he turn *Conformist* and answer himself; and it will not do, to whisper, that the Man is rude and crack'd; for indeed, the more crack'd he is, the more Kernel is seen.

The wise and good Bishop *Wilkins*, was a Man of another Spirit, and took comfort in his healing Endeavours upon his Death-bed. And the Lord of his infinite Mercy, move and engage their Right Reverend Survivors, and other eminent Divines of the Church, to lay to heart our doleful, broken, and declining State, and supplicate the King and Parliament to unite and strengthen the Protestant Interest. A far better Work, than to invite the *Non-conformists* to come in, as things do stand, or to provoke any of them to shew cause of their Nonconformity, which tends but to exasperate some, and to shake others out of their own Communion, if they prevent it not. I do not speak at all adventures. — If some could have executed the Laws, or prevailed with Magistrates so to do, we should have had a Militant Church indeed. In the Year 1669, we had several Articles sent down to the Clergy, with private Orders to some, to make the Conventiclers as few and small as might be.

The eighth and last was this, *Whether you do think * they That is, The might be easily suppress'd by the Assistance of the Civil Magistrates? Dissenters.* Some made bold to answer more than *Ay*, or *No*.

Since, what encouragement had a sort of scandalous Persons to become Informers. But God took some of these into his own hand; some cut off, and some convinced; and through the gentleness of the Civil Magistrate, and shame of the Office, Meetings went on, and grew, as they are at this day. — Some of the Informers were struck into an

Awe

Awe of the Preachers, and manner of their preaching; others baffled, and some, as *Gibson of Leicester*, died miserably. See the *Life of Mr. John Tregofs*.

I have been large in this Head; I will be shorter in the rest.

4. The fourth Consideration is, The Qualifications of their Persons. They have their Faults, no doubt: The Angels of the Churches, are not Angels of Heaven. They are better known to many Great Men in Church and State, than to me, who very rarely see or converse with any. But if they required my Testimony, I would give it, That for Loyalty to their King, I never knew any more. They cannot drink his Health, but they help to pray him to his Throne, pray that he may long sit upon it, and pray him towards Heaven. They break his Laws, say some, and sow Sedition? &c. Do they so? Then spare them not. They are grieved they cannot keep his Laws, that such Laws are made which they cannot keep. But have they resisted, when their Goods have been seized, or broken Prison, &c. What Conspiracy have they been in? Blessed be God, who hath kept them above the Slanders of their Adversaries, and convinced them (if any thing will) that they can Preach, and Pray, and not into a War; and neither Preach nor Pray us into a War, or a Plot.

Their Holiness and Morality is conspicuous, and they are useful many ways in the Common-Wealth; and for their Ministerial Abilities, allowing them but those Grains which no Man of Charity denies, and no Man of any Abilities can pass for currant without, they (are Men of different statures, it is true, but some) are eminent for variety of excellent and useful Learning, and known to the Church of God, by many rare pieces of Practical Divinity, and Controversal. Beside the many Tracts of particular Men, that will be valued while Christianity hath any Name among Ages to come. See but a Specimen of their Dexterity in Practical Divinity, in those Lectures, called, *The Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, and Supplement*. For positive, in their Morning Exercises at *St. Giles in the Fields*, &c. And their Polemical, in their Morning Exercises against Popery. And there are very able Divines and Preachers up and down the Land, beside those that are known in London. What Service hath Mr. *Pool's Nullity and Dialogue*, Dr. *Owen's Answer to Fiat Lux*, Mr. *Baxter's Key for Catholics*, &c. and Mr. *Clarkson's Moral Divinity of the Papists*, and his Observations upon the *Jesuits Speeches*, done? What a notable Book is Mr. *Hughes's Man of Sin*? I hope no Man will think, that I look upon them as the only Champions in this Cause, or extol them, to lessen or deprive any of our Conforming Worthies of the honour of their open and hazardous Engagements against that Daring Faction. No, but my Soul
longs

longs to see them all under the same Banner, and of the same Body, and the same Denomination. The Measures of these must not be taken from some Mens Books, who had magnified their Office more, if they had not exposed and vilified them. Are there any mean and weak among them? They may be useful if nourished and improved; but the best of them all, hath no more Liberty, besides what he ventures for, than the very meanest. I would conclude, humbly proposing these Queries:

First; *Whether it is thought that any of them, are enabled from above, with Ministerial Abilities; and instructed to the Kingdom of God?*

I will not descend so low as our Legal Rule of Trial; Are they fitted for the Ministerial Office? Have they Understanding in the Scripture? Skill in Original and other useful Learning? Are they Orthodox in Judgment, free from Heresie? Do they consent to the avowed Doctrines of the Church of England? Have they the Gift of Utterance? Are they willing, and desirous to serve in the Gospel of Christ? No doubt, but from the oldest to the youngest of them, they will submit to an Examination, if thought necessary to their Admission. Besides the full Proof that many of them have given, even to an Excellency, above most of our Brethren. What of all this? will be said unto me, They dissent from the Discipline, Government and Legal Worship. I ask again, are they for any essential, fundamental Parts of Apostolical, truly Primitive Church Government? Will they promise to administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel, as Christ enjoyned them; as the Apostles and their next Successors did celebrate them (as nearly as can be learned from undoubted and currant History) The chief of them say they can, and it is that they contend for. Lastly, I ask; Do we think that Christ would have sent them out to preach, or forbid them, the Apostles have given them the Right-hand of Fellowship, or not? Would St. Paul have rejoiced that the Gospel was preached by them or not?

Then, secondly, I query; *Whether any that are intrusted by Jesus Christ in the Over-sight of his Church, and administration of Government and Discipline in it, can forbid such Men to minister in his Church?*

Here seems to me, to be a Repugnancy between Christ and his Officers in his Church: He fits and qualifies Men with Gifts, and Furniture for his Churches Edification, and Good, who stand in need of them; makes them willing to spend and be spent; but the Governours of the Church will not admit them in, but cast them out; and by their Canon judg them excommunicate: so whom Christ sends, they refuse. Whose Will should sway the Master of the Family, Christ, or his Stewards? But it will be objected, they will not conform to the Church as established by Law; and better the Church should loose their Labours, than the Hedg of Government

vernment thrown down for them. *Dr. Stillingfl. Irenic. p. 42. Says, the Magistrate cannot forbid true Doctrine to be preached.*

I humbly offer, 1. Whether any such Laws should be made, stand in force, or executed against Men sound in Doctrine, and enabled by Christ to serve him? 2. Whether this Form of Government to which they cannot conform, be that Form of Constitution to which they must submit, or else be deprived according to the mind of Christ? I go upon this Supposition, That all particular Laws of the Church must agree with the General Rules of Christ, and not be to the damage of the Church of Believers. 3. Whether the Apostolical Church-Practice, be not rather a Rule to all succeeding Ages to follow, than the Fourth Age which waxed wanton in Ceremonies, and cast those Ceremonious Shadows from her Body, because the Sun of Imperial Favour, and Prosperity did shine upon her? 4. I humbly offer, that supposing that the present Church-Frame of Government; Discipline, Worship and Ceremonies, (which as it is with the scrupled Assents, and Additions, and Penalties, is no older than 1662.) be nearest of any in the World, as near as may be to the Prime Primitive Apostolical Church; for all this, whether there be no way to be used, or taken with the Non-conforming Brethren (suppose them all under an Error as to this particular of Church-Government and Ceremonies) but to silence them, to forbid them to preach, upon such penalties? Or, ought not the Governours of the Church, out of respect to their Master *Jesus Christ*, and to the Gifts and Graces which he hath given to them, and thereby commended them in his Name, to the Acceptation of his Flock, to find out some way to render them useful to the service of his People; I do suppose, that all, whom Christ hath qualified with Abilities, and made willing, and that have dedicated themselves to his Service, ought to be received and employed. (And may I speak and write it trembling) Is there not implied a Wo to them that hinder, as well as to them that preach not the Gospel?

Objection, *But they are disobedient to the Law of the Land, &c.*

I answer, To the Temporal Laws, they submit to them. To the Temporal Laws requiring Conformity, I make bold to ask, are any forbidden by that Law to preach, &c. whom Christ hath fitted for it? then, ought not that Law to be revised and repealed? Are there no Conditions or Terms required by that Law, but such as are strictly the Terms which Christ (by whom the Christian Magistrate bears Rule) hath directed them to make for all that shall enter into the Church? If so, then it must be a Law of the *Medes and Persians*; But there is no such thing pretended. This Law was not given in the Mount. And there are many among us that are for the Expiration and Non-obligation of the fourth Law, delivered by God himself.

himself. There is no temporal Law, but is nulled or amended when it appears detrimental to the Common-wealth; and why not, when the Church suffers by any Law, Ought not that to be looked into?

Object. But the Church needs them not, and there are more in the Universities, and Countries, and Cities, that will conform, than the Revenue of the Church will maintain.

Ans. 1. It is one thing to admit our Non-conforming Brethren to the Preferments of the Church, and another to the Service of the Church; admit them first, and God will provide for them in time: I believe they desire not that any Man should be displaced for them.

2. Put them into a Capacity for the discharge of the Ministerial Office, for which they are prepared, and many of them have Episcopal Ordination.

3. He that saith there are too many Labourers for the Work of Christ in the Church, must hold, that Christ gives Gifts superfluous, and gives Talents to them that have no place to trade with them, or knows not the weight of the Pastoral Charge, or the great need of Souls, and of more help.

4. If there be such store of Ministers that there is no room, it would be acceptable to Christ to take care of Forreign Plantations; But alas! How many go astray for want of Shepherds! [*See Mr. Godwin's Negroes Advocate.*]

Lastly; I doubt not, but it is in the Power of our Church Governors, to make a great Change for the great Advantage of the Church; some of them have a great influence upon the Legislation; many have interest in, if not, great freedom with the great Men in Power, Opportunities to speak for the Mourning Church, and to shew them what is good; which would more become the Ministers of Christ, than to expose the Infirmities of the *Non-conformists*, or misreport their Doings. If in the present Exigence and Dangers of the Church, (which they are sensible of, because of our Divisions, or else many would not invite them in, or condemn them for keeping out) Our great Men in the Church do not all that in them lies to procure our Peace, they are like to answer for it to the Prince of Peace. They that urge the Law against their Brethren, must either convince them of the goodness of the Law, which they can never do, as that to which they ought, upon peril of their Salvation to submit; or else declare their Grief, that with all their Importunities, Prayers, and favour with Men in Power, they cannot get the Law made easy; or else this lies against them, that many of the Church procured the Law, which was enacted upon their Advice, and to gratify them: and if so, then they but for a time conceal their own uncharitableness, under the Wing of a Law, which is pleasing
to

to them. It is evident to all that have Eyes to see, and that have two Eyes to see withal, who hath gotten by this Uniformity. If it be said, that Popery hath got by Non-conformity, they will readily reply, Who made them *Non-conformists*? They gave them warning of the Danger, and did all that was in the power of loyal, peaceable, honest Men, for Unity and Peace. For my part, I cannot reply, nor confute their Vindication: And so much for this Head.

5. Consider their Behaviour since their unhappy Ejection, under their many Sufferings. That their Sufferings have been great, is notorious to them that know them, or have Christian Bowels in them. To what end shall I make a distribution of them, into Spirituals, into Temporals, into Personal, and Domestical? They are condemned for making a Separation; of all Men in the Land they have the greatest cause to be for Union, and against Separation. They have suffered many cutting Separations! such as, from the Magistrates Favour and good Opinion; from their beloved Congregations; from their Habitations and Maintenance; from their Libraries and Studies; from their own Friends, especially the worldly-wise; from their former Familiars; from their Wives and Children. Abundance of them have been made of the Order of Mendicants, to eat other Mens Bread, to wear other Mens Cloaths, to procure their own Liberty, and to dispose of their Children to Callings with other Mens Money and Charity. These things are nothing indeed to them that have no Sences! Have they suffered in their Names, in their Liberties, Imprisonment, where they got their Deaths, as above-said? It hath been a dear Separation to them! The Nonconformity hath lost some Ministers many thousand pounds. And what have all these things been for? For their own Faults, Humours, factious Nature? &c. Have none of them any Wit, Reason, Policy, Religion, Conscience? Are all so naught, or so foolish, such Babes or Mad-men, that they hate Peace, hate their Wives and Children, and their own Flesh? Or, cannot chuse what's best, a good Living, or a nasty Prison, or be in peril of it? O that we would forbear to judg our Fellow-Servants! They declare plainly and truly, they cannot conform to the present Constitution; Who should best know that, They, or We? Will it follow we can, therefore they may? Or, that good Men have, therefore all good Men can? Two things have been declared by them.

I have spoken of their Sufferings once and again, but not for the same Cause, nor the same Things.

They that think them to be against a Church-Government, because they cannot conform to all particulars in this, are much mistaken.

1. That they cannot forbear their Ministry ; preach they must.

2. As dear as Preaching is to them, and the Magistrates favour, and a portion of the settled Maintenance, yet they cannot comply on the Legal Terms.

But have they attempted their Liberty by any treacherous Conspiracies ? Have they preached Seditiously ? or been *Achans* in the Camp, or *Nadabs* and *Abihu's* ? They ask no Favour, fear no Accusations. They may say, as that excellent Mr. *Joseph Allen*, in his gallant Speech (wise, humble, and full) to the Judge, when sentenced to pay a hundred Mark, and lie in Prison till it was paid ; ' He was glad that it had appeared, before his Country, that whatsoever he was charged with, he was guilty of nothing but doing his Duty ; and that all that did appear by the Evidence, was only, That he had sung a Psalm, and instructed his Family, others being there, and both in his own House ; and that if nothing which had been urged, would satisfy, he should, with all cheerfulness and thankfulness, accept whatsoever Sentence his Lordship should pronounce upon him, for so good and righteous a Cause. [*Life of Mr. Jos. Allen, pag. 59.*]

Object. But some of them gather Churches, Preach in time of Publick Service, and are ill-tempered Men, &c.

A. I meddle not in this, as it is a Matter of Controversy, stated and agitated by different Persuasions : But as it is a Matter of Complaint ; and so, I say, we ought to do all that good Men can do, for one Mind, one Way, to narrow Controversies, by enlarging Conditions of Communion.

2. Many cannot help preaching in time of publick Service.

1. Because else they cannot preach at all, for the distance of their Auditors.

2. Against their Wills they are constrained, because many that refuse to hear the Publick Ministers, would be drawn to Meetings of *Anabaptists* : And this was one reason which good Dr. *Stannion* in particular, gave for his preaching at St. *Albans* at such times. So, many of the *Non-conformists* are a second Sieve ; if they preach not, much Corn would fall to the gathered heaps of other Dissenters.

3. Seeing they are under an Obligation of Preaching, in one sense, the more publick their preaching is, the better, for then they will be sure to preach nothing but what all may hear.

4. The Law makes no difference between Publick and their own Houses, if they exceed Five ; if therefore they Judge themselves (and none can better judge than themselves) obliged to preach upon peril of the Law, they take the more publick Places, no greater Penalties being to be suffered for that, than a meer private Corner.

Lastly,

Lastly, Hath any of them suffered as an evil Doer ? (taking evil doing in the common sense) or deserved to suffer these eighteen Years ? Have they not asserted the Common Interest ? sought the publick Welfare ? opposed Popery ? and been as obedient Subjects to the King as any other, save only in this controverted Point ? What pity is that, the Bosom of the Church were not as open and as large as the King's gracious Protection is to them, as leading peaceable and quiet Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty !

What tho they complained ! have they sense, or are they stupid ! Have they stirred Sedition, and distracted the Government ? taking the advantage of a horrid Plot to play their own Game ; or laid a Counter-mine, (as it pleased one of our Moderators, or Plot-discoverers to entitle his Book)—If they are so gracious with the rich Tradesmen, and populace, it shall be to their Honour, and is to their Comfort, that they have made no other use of the goodness of the People, than to save their Souls. How glad should all true Protestants be, that the Presbyterian Plot, is fallen together with their own Popish Plot, upon the same Pates ! Or was the Separation of the *Non-conformists* the Door by which Popery was entering in ? Then indeed the Door must be stopt up by all means. But by this time, it is but too apparent, and with grief be it written, that the Church of England had bred such Birds, as would have plucked out her Eyes. The Heifers always went in the Church-yard, with which the Papists plow'd ; shameless Hypocrites that cried up the Church, to throw it down !

Not to multiply Objections and Answers. It is, or may be clear, that nothing but Conscience of Sin and Duty doth govern the Learned, Judicious, and honest *Non-conformists*. I suppose there are many of them that deserve these Characters : and because they are governed by their Judgments and Consciences ; it is the great Duty of Governors to have respect to them, and to take away all Occasions of our Bleeding Divisions. It is in the Power of our Governors, to remove the Causes, and not in them. If the Judgment and Consciences of our Governours, be to walk strictly, according to the Rule and Measure of our Conformity, and cannot relax, nor remove any part of it ; and the Judgment of the *Non-conformists* be, that they cannot come up to it : then the Divisions must remain as now they are, and the Decision be deferred to the last coming of Jesus Christ. But may it not be decided before that ? for where hath Christ made the Governors Consciences the exact Measure of other Ministers ? But our Laws declare most of the things in Controversy, to be in their own nature indifferent, to be mutable, and therefore it is in their Power to take away both the Things, and the Obligation to them ; and to bind us only

to the Observation of necessary things, and to leave things which they found indifferent, as they found them, without judging one another. And for this reason, Wisdom and Charity requires a relaxation upon their parts; and they have this to plead for them, that they have long tried to bring Ministers and People to an uniformity in these things, but could not; and therefore, for Peace, and Love, Unity, and Edification, they have taken away their Obligation.

That the *Non-conformists* cannot subscribe, and declare, and subject themselves to this Yoke (how easy soever it seems to many) because they cannot in their Judgment and Conscience approve and do them, needs no great labour to prove it, to any Man of Charity.

1. Because their Interest, as well as Duty, hath put them upon the serious study of the Cause. And being Men of Learning, Light, Labour, and of Years, they may be supposed as fit to find out their own part, as other Men to find it for them. And to any that hath but the desire to see, patience to read, and that thinks not to throw them off with a scornful Huff; they have written like Men of Parts, Judgment, and Temper. And they daily almost send abroad into the World, the Issues of serious Thoughts, and ripe Understandings, and Appearances of great Seriousness and Resolution.

2. They do not follow the Dictates of a weak and erring Conscience, but fear to sin against a tender Conscience, upon the best information of their Judgments. There is a great difference between a weak Conscience, and a tender Conscience; a weak Conscience follows a weak Judgment, and the clearer and stronger the Judgment is, the more tender should the Conscience be. It may therefore seem, that their dissent proceeds not from their Weakness, and that their obstinacy proceeds not from their Will, as opposing Light and Reason; but from the settlement and determination of their Judgment and their Sincerity, not daring to act against their Judgments. But if it were their Weakness, it must be indulged; if it were their Obstinacy against Reason, (which appears not) what will a wise Father do with a stomachful Child? Will he provoke and encrease his Stomach, by requiring of him needless things with great rigour, and not rather qualify and win him?

3. If it be not Conscience of Sin that makes them dissent, it is either their Policy for some worldly Interest, or their Folly. If the first, then it cannot consist with worldly Policy, to take ways directly contrary to what they aim at. What honour is it for a Man to be railed upon, reviled, suspected?

suspected ? &c. What Profit is it for a Man to quit a Certainty for an Uncertainty ? and to live precariously ? Where the Policy of *Non-Conformity* lies, doth not appear to me. Is it their Folly ? Are there no wise Men among them ? not one ! They have had Experience by this time to make them wise, if nothing else. If they are Fools, it is for *Christ*. They come not behind their Neighbours for Wit, and Abilities.

4. What, but Conscience of Sin and Duty, could afford them that Peace and Joy, in Disgraces and Sufferings, in Hazards both living and dying ! You'll say, *Fanaticism* may end in fancied Joys and Comforts. True, but these Men could as well distinguish between the Effects of Imagination, and Self-examination, between a Rock and Sand, and have taken as much pains to avoid a Cheat, as other Men. It must be granted, that many that have drawn Sufferings upon themselves deservedly, by their Imprudence, have flattered themselves in high Conceits, and conceited Comforts. But whether the Sufferings of Men of understanding, ripeness of Judgment, Inquisitiveness into their Case, their Reasons, Motives, and after Prayer and Diligence, have deliberately chosen a suffering Part, and found Comfort from the Conscience of their Sincerity, be no more than the Comfort of a Hypocrite under the Power of Delusion, ought not rashly to be censured, and be rejected, as no Argument of their being conscientious ?

5. If they are not conscientious in their *Non-conformity*, then they are disobedient to the King, and the Laws ; they are Factious, Disturbers of the Churches Peace, Schismatical, and Enemies to the Churches Growth and Union ; they are hypocritical, and in a word Atheistical ; they are unrighteous, unkind, unmerciful to their own Flesh, to their Wives and Children, oppressive to those few that are liberal to them ; yea many have destroyed themselves, and no less than this can be said of their Way, that it is the high-way of Sin and certain Damnation. And if they are such wicked Persons, such Hypocrites in Masks and Cloaks, they are but used too well ; and better they should be out of the Church, than in it. But then to bring them off from these horrid Imputations ; these things are considerable ;

1. If they were not Men of Integrity and Consciences, they would not keep without, because there is more to be got within. Doubtless they are not the only conscientious Men ; for there are many thousands I hope, of sincere, good Men that conform, that have Peace and Comfort in a faithful discharge of their Duties. But, I say, if our Dissenting Brethren were not conscientious, and sincere, then they would swallow Oaths or Declarations, subscribe to Salt and Spittle, for the sake of the present World. He that acts not with respect to the World,

to come, must needs act for the good things of this. Now 'tis clear, that the *Conformists* have the higher Honour, and Precedence, and the fattest Morfels.

2. Our *Non-Conformists* have a better Character, and are looked upon as Conscientious Men, and fit for the Churches Service; 1. Because of the due Respect, and Repute they have among Men of Parts, Estates and Temper. 2. Because of the many Invitations, and even Chidings to unite and come in: which supposeth them to be Men of Worth and Goodness, or else the further off the better. 3. Because of the oft vanishing talk of an Indulgence in the first Years of their *Non-Conformity*, *Comprehension*, since, and fair *Promises* often made. 4. Because that many Justices of the Peace angry enough for the Church, and not pleased with them, have forbore to act against them, and could not find in their Hearts to execute the Laws upon Conscientious Men, though of different Apprehensions. My Conclusion is, That they appear to be Men of Conscience, and if so, way should be made for their coming in. One thing is urged to prejudg their tenderness, that Conscientious Men should come as far they can, and as near a closure as may be. Ah! what though they can do much, yet as to actual Admission, It is not doing some or many things that will bring them in; for they must declare and subscribe to all and every thing. I knew a Man of Years and Parts, that could conform to all things, save the Cross, and lost near 200 l. *per Annum*, for that. It is all or nothing in this case. If we would bring them in, take down the narrow Doors, and make them a Passage of just Dimension and Latitude upon these Premises, That the Case of the Dissenting Brethren is hard: that what they demanded, or proposed, upon the Kings Commission, to the Bishops and the Commissioners for the Church, were but what was thought fit to be considered of by Men, no doubt of as great Learning, and other Qualifications, as any other of the same Quality; That their Sufferings have been very great, their Demeanour peaceable, their Abilities valuable, and their Dissent conscientious. I do humbly conclude, and propose it to my Reverend Superiours, in any place of Power, Favour or Interest, that they would sincerely endeavour the qualifying of these worthy Persons, for a legal discharge of their Ministerial Duties: A thing so pleasing to God, agreeable to the Government and Condescension of *Jesus Christ* to the Christian Temper; so conducing to the Churches Union, Peace, Growth and establishment; to the silencing of many Controversies, and that fearful Clamour and Accusation of Schism, that I am not able to express it. I cannot, it is acknowledged, judg what is another Man's particular Duty; but I humbly conceive it is mine in my place (which is but low indeed) to provoke any Superiours to it. And if I were in their place

place (which is but a Supposition next to a Dream) I shou'd neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep with Satisfaction, till this were done, or endeavoured ; nor think of appearing before *Jesus* the Chief Shepherd, with Joy or Acceptation. Hath he required this Uniformity at our hands, of this Extent, with these Sanctions, having for many Years seen no better Effects of them ?

Hath not his Gracious Majesty by a late Proclamation for a great, and necessary Duty of fasting and Prayers, made this one end of that Solemn Duty, to unite the Hearts of his Protestant Subjects ? Have we not in one Prayer representd bleeding Wounds from our Divisions, and in another prayed for Union ? Have many taken Direction to wrestle with God, (Laugh and Scorn who dare at the Word) to grant us that Blessing ? And what was the meaning of it ? Was no more to be understood by it, than to bring the Dissenting Brethren on a sudden to see, what after many Years Study, Prayers and Sufferings they cannot see ? On a sudden to convert them against their Reason ? And to condemn themselves for their Dissent. Surely, I cannot think it : for what were this but to pray for an Impossibility or a Miracle, and to pray in vain, in our Solemn Humiliation ! If Union be so desirable a Mercy, as certainly it is ; what shall we do for Union ? Are there no other Terms of Union but these ? Without doubt it is their great Sin, not to come as near to a Closure as possibly they can ; but doth all the Duty lye on their side ; and no more upon us, than to call them in ? And if not, let them be excommunicated from the Church, if not accursed of God ! Or were they never meant ? As being no Protestants ; or not Loyal Subjects ? And what are they that say or think so ? The Lord in Mercy grant, he may not see such a Trial, as I doubt not they would by the Grace of God, as forwardly engag'd in, as true Protestants, and as Loyal Subjects to the King and Government, to the Expence and Profusion of their dearest Blood.

I cannot think any thing more suitable to the Clemency of the King's Nature, who hath always been ready to gratify peaceable Designs. Can we think it is not suitable to the Constitution of the late Great, and United Parliament, or to any other that shall be chosen by a free Election ? This great Body hath as quick discerning Eyes as ever any other had, and have made as deep Discoveries of the Works of Darknes as any other, for their time : and see a necessity of uniting Protestants at home, and succouring Protestants abroad ; and cannot they discern, by what Persons, whose Endeavours, to whose purposes our Constitutions have been screwed so high ? They are not unsensible by whom they have been called a Presbyterian Paliament, and who are afraid of their undoing all : Perhaps indeed they would think it hard Measure, that every Man in *England* should be

be turned out of Doors, that will not be content that his House shall be exactly Uniform. They may by Experience know that there may be Peace and Unity, and Charity in Houses, that are of different Figure and Form. There is a vast Difference between pulling down painted Glass, which keeps out Light, and making Doors wider, or taking down some Partitions; and pulling down of Houses. Oh! let it never be said, that Church-Men are most morose, difficult, and stiff, and can grant nothing, but in a great Extremity.

And I pray God that he would move, and effectually work upon their Hearts, to take the Opportunities and Advantages God puts in to their Hands, to supplicate and promote the great Work of Healing. It will be a Work most pleasing to all *Conformists*, that have the truest Principles of Christianity; that are not factious to keep what they have, or think the gain of Peace to the Church, will bring a loss to of them; or that are not Melancholy, and given to pore upon Shadows, and to think their Fancies to be the unalterable Frame of Antiquity. If we cannot distinguish between an Alteration and a Dissolution; between Reformation (of what hath been changed one way or other, in every Princes Reign, since the 2d of *Edw. 6.*) and an Extirpation, we are not Cathedral-men, that know the Note may be changed, and the Instrument unbroken, and that the same *Psalms* may be read and sung.

Many cry out upon *Schism*, that miss of the Notion; It is a very great Sin! Should we not therefore do what possibly we can, to remove the Causes, and to redeem Souls from the Sin and Guilt of it? To this end, let us take notice, that the Carnal Heart is the Seat of *Schism*. Are there no Schismatical Notions, or Passions and Lusts in us within the Pale? We know that *Uniformity* in Discipline and Modes of Worship, could not extinguish, or restrain Divisions in former days. How was the Church divided between those two, the prevailing and rising *Arminian* Innovators, and the *Anti-Arminian* Propugnators of the Doctrine and ancient Discipline of the Church? And the Feuds were greater between these in many Respects, than between the *Conformist* and *Non-Conformist*. And the straining of the Girdle of *Uniformity* burst the Buckles, and the Garments hung loose, till by a new Act, the Girdle was made stronger, and less than it was before, and new Buckles made a purpose for it. —

There is an Unity, where there is not an Uniformity, and *Vice versa*. To what Church in *London* can a Man go, and find an Uniformity, exactly keeping with Rubrics and Orders? and yet there is a *Conformity*, and in general an *Unity*. I might instance in Ministers, and People's deviating from the Rule, in Prayers. What Uniformity among the People? some standing, others kneeling, and others leaning, if not sitting; Some facing the
East,

East, others the *West*, and others the *North* and *South*; some use the *Re-
Yponds*, some low, and others loud, and others silent; and yet there
may be an Unity in the *Amen*, either oral or mental. *Uniformity* will
never be forced to Particulars, it must lie in Generals, as Unity in Essen-
tials. God both in the works of Nature, Providence and Grace, is most
glorious in Variety, in Multiformity. Uniformity as it is an outward ma-
nifestation of Unity, and as a help to Unity and Edification, and Peace, is
most desirable; but too rigorous pressing of it, is one cause of *Schisms*; and
Contentions. To a clear stating of *Schism*, we must enquire into the Church
as invisible, visible, as in its one Essential Nature, separate from Legal
Establishment, and in its Legal Establishment; and accordingly distinguish of
Schism, which is aggravated from Circumstances. In our days *Non-Conformity*
and *Schism* are made convertible, whereas the internal Causes may be in *Con-
formists*, as well as *Non-Conformists*. But what is the external Bond and Liga-
ture of *Conformity*? what makes the *Conformist*, and what makes the *Non-Con-
formist*? Take away the Mount and Pale, and the Inclosure and the Open-
field is all one Field for the Flocks to feed together. Some have extolled the
Act of Uniformity as a blessed Act; and some as the Bulwark of the Pro-
testant Religion. It must be acknowledged that it is a Blessing to the
Church, to have nursing Fathers, and to have our Religion established by Law.
But he that is the Author and Founder of our Religion is the Bulwark also;
and the King's Life and Constancy is a wonderful Mercy to us: But
alas! what a Fence is the Act, if the Governours were changed? The
Protestant Religion as Christian, as opposite to Popery, was before the
Act was; and would be, if it were revised and changed. The most that
can be made of the Separations, is, that they are illegal, and the aggravated
Schism illegal. The Differences are originally in the minds of Men,
and forced out by an Act. From this the *Conformist* and *Non-Conformist*
receive their Denominations. Before this, were Dr. *Bates*, Dr. *Jacomb*, Dr.
Annesly, Mr. *Gouge*, and others, *Schismaticks*, any more than the learned Dr.
Tillotson, or Mr. *Nest*? They could edify the Church together, carry on
the Morning Exercise together, and converse as Brethren. But since a
new Door and Partition hath been set up, they appear to be as two Fa-
milies, and two Parties (I doubt not but the Dean's Catholick Head
and Heart can take them in.) If they hear him not, perhaps they may in-
cur the angry Mark of Separation; if he hear any of them, he may incur
a Disfavour. Take away the Doors, and Partition-walls, and the House
is one again. And there are great suspicions that the Surveyors made the
Doors for Exclusion, and not a large Admission.

1. If you consider; that which was an offensive Innovation to a *Brown-
rig*, *Ward*, *Prideaux*, &c. (*quanti viri!*) is now made Legal, viz. the
H service

service in *Latin* in the Universities, *Westminster, Winchester, Eaton*, when they please, as was noted before.

2. The *Non-Conformists* of old stuck at Subscriptions, *ex animo*, to the Canon ; but by this they must subscribe and declare, &c. a sure way to win them!

3. Not only to Articles of Religion (which was enough for a *Conformist* in Queen *Elizabeth's* days) but all and every thing, &c.

4. Did some think that Bishops and Presbyters were but one Order? Now to keep them out, the Bishop is consecrated in a new Form, to the Office of a Bishop, as a Superiour Order ; at least as some conceive.

5. Many had taken the Covenant, which renounced not the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and by virtue of these conjunctly, did adhere to Kingly Government, under the Usurpation, and endeavoured to restore the King. But now that must be renounced (still to help to bring in more) into Conformity, was it not the way? Will they for Peace and Union quit the Directory, and conform to a Liturgy? it shall not bring them in! Would they have the Liturgy amended? They shall not, but in as few things as may be. Can they use the Ceremonies rather than be deprived? they must declare openly as much. Can they practise the old Conformity? They shall renounce the Covenant, by which they were bound to endeavour a Reformation? Would they become Lecturers, as heretofore they might be? No, not except they declare Assent and Consent once a month. If one thing will not keep them out, another shall; if nothing at all will keep them out, then they are hardly trusted without great Evidences, if not Recantations. And who are most gratified and encouraged to come in, but a Man whose Conscience can reach many Miles to two several Diocesses; it may be, from Living to Living? He hath no more to do, but to come within his time, and declare according to Law, and read his Certificate of renouncing, &c. and the Law hath nothing more to require of him, save that where he is Resident, or Incumbent, and hath no Impediment; then indeed he shall read the Service, &c. once a Month, or forfeit five Pound. If a Man loves his Ease or his Profit, let him conform; all the difficulty is in getting in: If he will, he may do any thing *per alium*, except dye, and give up his Accounts.— When I consider these things, I do not wonder there are so many *Non-Conformists*. —

That Honour of his Profession, and our Age, and either the Example, or the Shame of them that shall succeed, *Sr. Matthew Hales*, said (to *Mr. Baxter*, on whose word I take it) this Act of Uniformity will never unite and heal us; and did upon occasion draw up a new Bill of Uniformity. His Judgment might as soon be taken as any Mans; and because his Memory

mony and Manuscripts, are in honour with our late, wise, and great Parliament, I pray God that Bill may not be over-look'd, when that Honourable Assembly shall meet again to debate it.

Here I could stop without the decency of conclusion, my running thoughts being put to a stand, and ready to yeeld to a prevailing Impotency, and grief of Heart.

First, Because so few Heads and Hands were united, and at work, to repair the Breaches of a great Church, which should be every good Man's Prayer and Endeavour.

Secondly, Because the Result of the Debates, and Counsels of tho but few, yet great, wise, and good Men, should be rejected.

But why should we look for better from those Men, who saw not what they had done amiss, nor repented of other great Evils, which the whole Nation hath seen and felt, when Men's Principles are but as Wheels, moved by Interest, the Interest must be changed, before the Wheels turned backward? Souldiers of Fortune prolong a War, and Counsellors of Fortune prolong Distractions. The Troubles of *Israel*, that put the Horsemen into a disorder, and scotch'd the Wheels of many of our Chariots, were never for the drawing of them into one Body again, and making them serviceable. Some grave and good Men checked the progress of the rest, and at last the best over-awed the Guilty, and did gallantly bear up against daring *Rome*: But the Opposition had been the more successful and secure, if they had brought the differing Parties of Protestants into a mutual Trust and Assurance. Blessed be the Men, and blessed be their Memories, and blessed be their Counsels, who have laboured to heal the hurt of the Daughter of *Sion*! and happy they who first arrive at the Haven, thupon the Planks of a torn and broken Church! The Men of a *Mosaic* Spirit, would have set the contending *Israelites* at one; but our wise Men would not believe a Bill of Union. They who had done the wrong, thrust the Reconcilers away, *q. d.* Who made you Judges? But our Time was not, and is not yet come, altho we have had a great Body, inspired with as great a Soul as ever breathed within those Walls, that saw a like necessity of including Protestants, as of excluding Papists. These see the Things of our Peace, but cannot overtake Peace. *Perfidious Protestants* (so called in the Humble Address, Nov. 29. 1680.) could not find the way of Peace in his Majesty's Restauration, it was as far above them, as Heaven is above the Earth; nor knew how to imploy the Sword & Treasure but against Protestants abroad; nor their Power, but upon Protestants at home,

They may read their Character in his Majesty's Proclamation against Debaucheries, 1660. printed, and to be read in Churches.

who helped to restore them to it ; nor their Peace, but in Effeminacy, Debaucheries, contempt of God, and the Power of that Religion, which they either contracted into an uneasy corner of a Faction, or else enlarged as far as Rome. They who reared too high a Wall about the Church, have not seen the influence of the Sun upon it, to impregnate it into a desired fruitfulness ; the few Plants of a purer kind that spring up in it, look pale and yellow, faint and languid : There is a great noise and sound of Religion, but little Life and Soul ! What a brood of Atheists, Papists, Zealous Formalists and Contenders have grown up ? Since a Bill of Divorce was issued out to separate able Ministers from their Congregations, an illegitimate Race sprung up, who cry up, Law, Law, and sin against the Confessions and Prayers imposed upon us by it : And the Church, which was the most pregnant Mother of solid and holy Christians of any in the World, after many Years travel and pains, sees more of the shape and form, than of the lively Spirit and strength of true Piety. They who take themselves to be wronged, and the Divorce to be null in it self, have come together, (tho but now and then, and by stealth, for most part, till of late) are liable to the Courts for unlawful Society with their espoused People, have rather multiplied Sorrows, than multiplied Joys. Restore the Prophets their Wives ; or if they are dead by Law, give them Licenses to marry where they can ; marry the unmarried, and they will, as they do, pray for you ; and the Church that is now weak, and sickly, shall be the joyful Mother of Children ; born and brought up for God. Take in more Labourers, there is Field-room enough, and the Harvest will be the greater, and so the Joy in Heaven.

To draw to a Conclusion ; I will first point out the Obstructors of our Union.

2. Give my Opinion, that the Case of the *Non-conformists*, that are sound in Faith, peaceable, and godly, is that which no Man need be ashamed of, or to appear in as an Intercessor.

1. Indeed I am troubled, that there are any such to be found in a Reformed Church, and of all other, in this Church, that oppose or hinder a Coalescence. But all are not *Israel*, that are of *Israel*. Many of the Church are for it, and against it : are for it, in its present state of Confinement, and not for it in an Enlargement, which will be really for its Glory and just Authority. What Multitudes are there of these, both High and

and Low? I will pray for them that are above me, and speak of them that are near upon a level with me. I might divide these into Clergy and Laity; I will keep me to the first, because they do influence many of the other. But by the way, I will take up a Remark: It is so come to pass, that our driving and compelling Clergy, have fewer Admirers and Friends than they once had. Many Men, of little or no Religion in Judgment and Heart, could not bear the plain and pressing Preaching of many able Ministers, reputed to be unlearned; because constant and popular Preachers, they could easily part with these, and give rest to their own Ears, by striking them dumb. They were tickled, if not captivated, by the florid and gentile Preaching, and Writings of some (of a more Romantick, than true Majestick and Divine Stile) of the Sons of the Church; and therefore say, Let these preach, and the rest keep silence. Some of these kept up the Repute of the Church of *England*, under its Oppression, that lost it in its Exaltation. When their Feathers were grown, and covered with yellow Gold, they spared their Voices, fled from Preferment to Preferment, to gather Gold, but spread not their Wings to sucker and cherish their Brood.

These were the Masters of the Religion of the Courtiers; and many being tired with the Usurpation, gave up their own Reason in complement to Courtiers, for a time, did easily submit to what was determined by our Leaders. And who were they? Church-Papists, as well as Church-Protestants; some of whom were carried beyond their own temper of Moderation; first, to strain hard to practice, what really they adjudged of an evil Tendency, tho of an indifferent Nature, as they thought; and then they were to exact of others, what they could do themselves. The more discerning and obstinate, saw the Journeys end of these Charioteers; and were resolved on their own way: Others that were peaceable and facile, complied, in hopes of the establishment of the King's Declaration; and were held in Parlee, till their Enemies ('tis a sad, but too true a word) got that Power, as to force them to yeeld or fly. The Gentlemen, understanding the Mystery of the Church-Government was Power, and the Mystery of many Church-mens Zeal, was Church-Dignities, saw that he must Act and Vote, not for the pure Interest of Religion, but the temporal Interest of these Designing Men, began to recoil, and then to look to his own Ground. Many of these rode in Company, but seeing the Company were resolved for *France*, and *Rome*; when they had gone as far as *Canterbury* and *Dover*, and kept pace with them, were resolved to go no further, but to turn back, and break from the Company. The rest of the Church-Conformists, were either the same, or like them that were in be-
fore;

fore; and continued the same painful course in their Ministry, or took cold, became idle, hot, intemperate, and offensive: The first have some respect, the others, no more than they deserve. A new Generation come up within these eighteen or twenty Years; many of them take the rising Side, Cant some Scraps that fall from their Leaders Mouths; preach as much with their Teeth as with their Tongues; being neither studious, nor considerate, nor modest, but venturers in Censures; they are thought unfit to direct and oversee the Souls of Men. Upon some solemn Times, upon some solemn Days, they Discharge freely, but Aim with an evil Eye, scare away some Birds, but convince no Man of Sin, or Duty. The Judicious of all Degrees, spare not to declare their dislike of these Men. In a word, The growth of Popery, and the antipathy that is kindled against it, by the fiery Designs of Papiists, and the Light of Truth; the Moderation of some eminent discerning Church-men, the good Behaviour of Dissenters, the weakness of the Protestant Interest, by our needless Divisions, the sobriety of our Gentry, the unanimity both of them; and the able Country-men, and Citizens, and their Zeal, seeing all at Stake, doth seem to open a way to a desired Union, notwithstanding the averfation of such Opposers as I shall name.

1. A Party of Rigid Imposers, Imposers in Opinion, not yet in Power, that's the best of it; they mightily take the Yoke, Saddle, and Collar of Bells, and the Rack in which we must follow, as the only way. We being Subjects, must not judg, but submit; and they being Judges, weigh to every Man the same weight; the Weakest must bow down to as great a Load as the strongest, whether they can bear it or not; and measure to every Man his *Omer*, whether he can digest it, or not, (if it were all *Manna*, directly from Heaven, a weak Person must strive to swallow it) but yet God, that allowed an *Omer* to every one that could, did not require it of every one that could not, upon pain of turning out, and not coming within five miles of the Family. If *Saul* had been of these Mens Constitution, *David* must not kill *Goliath* like a *Non-conformist*, but go forth with his Armour, his Helmet, and Coat of Mail, and gird on his Sword; but he was so reasonable, that seeing *David* could not go with them, he should go without the Formalities of a Champion. There may be as great disproportions between the understandings of some young unstudied Conformists, and the understandings of great Doctors, as was between *David's* Head, and *Saul's* Head and Helmet; the things required for *Assent*, are much too big for their Capacities: But every *L. A. B.* that is but *B. A.* or a Deacon, must *Assent and Consent, Declare, Abhor*, as perfectly as any *Professor of Divinity*, as positively as if he were an *Arch-Bishop*. They must see

see these things with other Mens Eyes, or must not take the Work upon them, and yet have not the help of a Licens'd Comment, upon (as some think) a hard Lesson. I should think, Catechise the Novices well in our Articles, and when they Assent, let them Assent to what they understand, and no more; and if *Consent to the use* be the meaning of the thing, tell them plainly so. I am for a plain and easy way, and as light a Burden as may be laid, that so we may have the more and better Company, and the more comfortable Journey. (Pardon the hastiness of my Pen, in saying, what I am for; Who am I? and the Business is not come to my Voting.)—But these large and intricate Impositions, being equal upon all, Unlearned as well as Learned, do preserve a Notion somewhat like an Implicit Faith: and not *totò Cælo*, different from an Infallibility. — But, say they, it is necessary to eradicate bad Principles out of the minds of Men which grew up in the late Times. I demand whether out of the minds of them that are planted with them? (But can my Declaration convert another, and root out ill Principles out of his mind? What if he doth not see the reason of my Opinion?) or out of the minds that never received those pernicious Principles? Yet still I only declare for my self, and if I was never infected with them, there is no danger of my *propagating of them*; let us propagate Godliness and Honesty, and these Principles will never grow up by them. The Principles had been buried in the Church, like Weeds in a new-digg'd Garden, had not our renouncing them kept them in memory.

2. Some poor, low, narrow spirited Men, superstitious and misled, are for this Way, as the only way of Entrance and Continuance in the Churches Service; Spirits so poor that they cannot afford one token of Charity to Dissenters, as if such a Spiritual Alms, would undo them; so low, that having never stood upon the Shoulders of Wisdom and Experience, they see not the Latitude of the way of Heaven; so narrow-hearted, that he thinks there is no room for any in Church-Communion, especially in the Ministry, that will not go into, and stand in a little Frame, like that in which he stands, like an Image. His Charity may extend to the Salvation of Heathens, (a Notion pretty rise) but not to the Toleration of Christians, especially of Preachers of the common Salvation, if they will not conform. Papists shall sooner enter into the Kingdom of God, than a Presbyterian. And who is the Presbyterian? He may be a Bishop, a Lord, a Parliament-Man, yea a whole Parliament, a Lord Mayor, if but moderate, as well as a preaching moderate *Conformist*. The Moderate of all Qualities, is the Presbyterian; but the Presbyterians are not moderate: No, a Presbyterian, is an out-witted Jesuit, and a Jesuit is an overwitting Presbyterian. These new Character-makers are at this Wit: and seeing he would be a

Wit that makes the Character, I doubt not, but he is for *being* of the greatest sort of Wits, that is, the over-witting Presbyterian. This piece of Formality makes himself and the Government all one, that must be overthrown, thinks he, if any thing be abased that varies from his Conceptions, Model, and Measure of his Assent. He is not a Papist, something keeps him off; but, good Man, he hath high thoughts of the old Way; every Ceremony is in his Eye, a kind of a hallowed thing; and the Treasure of the Church, is wrapped in the Rag of Antiquity, which never was a piece of a Garment in fashion in the Apostles days, or some Centuries after: He contends for the gray Hairs which grow over the Eyes of the Church, and the Nails which have pinched and nipt many tender Skins, as for the Life and Soul of Religion. Many are misled by their Informers, not in Antiquity only, but in Modern Times, even in their own Days, or the days of their immediate Fathers. The Times of War and Usurpation, are the only ill Times in their Chronicles; which were ill indeed, in respect of Punishment and Sin; but have nothing but good to say of the ill Times of Provocation, of Peace proceeding. They do most partially and untruly charge the War upon the Presbyterians. Much more falsely upon Praying and Preaching; or the Divines that were in the *Parliament Quarters*, and City, many of which were forced thither. It was as truly a *Popish Plot and War*, and, at first, between Prerogative and Liberty, tho not so bare-faced as this horrid Plot. These Men are abused by some of our Deceiving Writers, and know as little of what they declaim against, as they do of the Dissenters of this present Age. But *Addabatorum more pugnans & clamores (quantos!) excitant.*—It was a bloody Civil War, visibly about Civil Matters; it was called *Bellum Episcopale*, not by some Parliament-Men only, but one Bishop, or more; to make the rising Clergy part with their Money to maintain it; but it was *Bellum Papale pro Rege, contra Regem*, as well as against Parliament and Protestants.

3. Our persecuting Fire-brands, are against Protestant Peace and Union. They approve of persecuting Laws, if they might have a Parliament to make them; and it shall not be persecution against Dissenting Protestants, but Justice, because it is but the Execution of Laws: and Dissenters must be undone, to preserve the Law and Government. How freely do they exclaim against it, closely gird at our last Parliament? fly upon our Blessed Reformation from Popery; blemish it with Aspersions of Sedition and Rebellion (an Affront to Religion not to be endured.) [If they read no more than Dr. *Du Moulin*, Pr. of *Canterbury's Answer to Philanax Anglicus*, they will be more just to the Reformation.] These Men are so well prepared for a Popish Successor, that they can trust God with their Religion, tho in Popish Hands, (And cannot they trust themselves too?) but can-

not trust a Non-conforming Protestant, with preaching a Sermon, or Praying, not in an open Pulpit. These blow up Controversies into unquenchable dissensions, into large Differences, into wide Chasins, and unpassable Gulfs. They condemn the Magistrate for Coldness, if he let a Dissenter preach, or leave him a Bed to lie upon. The Ejected are like Suburbs, without the Walls of Uniformity, burn the Suburbs to save the Church within ; whereas one would think it were the safer way, to build a Wall about the Suburbs, and bring them within the Line. They hate House-preaching, and running into Corners, and would bring out the Non-conformists into the Sun-shine, but only in the Dog-days. *Caniculum Persecutio tui video.* Tertull. *Parce Civibus Miles,* is Heathen Latin ; but *Occide & manduca,* is in the Original.

It was a severe word of King James ; *If this be all* (quoth he) *which they have to say,* (meaning our famous Dr. Jo. Rainolds, and the other Divines, called Non-conformists) *I shall make them Conform themselves, or I will hurry them out of this Land, or else do worse.* [Conference at Hampton-Court. p. 85.] It is as likely that they know not what Spirit they are of, that are for hurrying good Men, as it was from a Spirit of Flattery, that a Lord said, He was persuaded the King spoke in that Conference by the Holy Ghost. How well soever he spake in some parts of it, yet that saying might have been spared.

4. Idle and insufficient Ministers, that live at ease, and as the manner of speaking is, enjoy themselves, that are more Abroad than at Home, and as seldom in their Studies, as they are in their Pulpits, are indisposed to a Closure. These Conform perhaps above Conformity sometimes, whose Surplices are as Cloaks for their Faults ; and their pretended Loyalty makes them impregnable against deserved Censures. Many of these consort with Companions of a Feather, inflame one another into a degree of madness. These drive away their People, and when they are gone, throw after them, and revile those that entertain them better. These, with all their Might, cry, the Church, the Church ; declaim against much preaching, (and is not that a good way to save their pains, by calling it needless ?) We are not now to convert Heathens, (they would rather confirm than convert them) much preaching hath spoiled the World ; I hate these Presbyterians, nothing will serve them but Preaching ; cry out against Calvin, the Parliament, the Fanaticks, and run over their Railery, as Papists do their Beads. These are afraid of admission of more good Preachers, that their Manners will be inspected, and their Churches quite deserted ; that they must take more and better pains, or else be exposed.

5. Ecclesiastical Merchants, *Ecclesie Possessive Filii*, are against admission of more to the exercise of the Sacred Function. The Trade hath been in

some great Mens Hands, and the engrossing of the Commodities of the Church, hath enriched many, that never would have touched the Burden with one of their Fingers, but for double Wages. But if more Ministers are capacitated by Law, the Endowments of the Church will be distributed into more hands. These turn Prophets, that the Church will fall, when due Encouragements are taken away from Learned Men, in which Rank they place themselves; *q. d.* Take away Pluralities, you discourage Learning; whereas it is too well known to both our Universities, that they are a discouragement to Learning, that many are not rewarded with a Plurality, for their double Portion of Learning; and that the Learning of the Curat, is as much the Ornament and Support of the Church as theirs, many of whose Absence is as profitable to their Parishes, (except to the Poor, who have no Alms at their Doors, nor relief from the Parsonage) as their Presence. These are potent in their Patrons, Friends, and Relations, and may obstruct the Work, when things come to the Vote, and Flesh and Blood pleads Reason against the true Interest of Religion, and the crying Necessity of Souls. But let them not fear, for there is no danger of putting them out, to bring others in; Nor do the *Non-conformists* desire their Liberty with the deprivation of any now in possession.

6. Some honest and good Men are afraid of an Alteration from a mistaken Case. Many ran into Conformity to be out of Confusion, and are now tenacious of this Conformity, for fear of a Toleration of Popery, and Antichristian Sects. But there are Mediums between Extreams. They argue in their haste, from the Necessity of a Church-Government, against an abatement of Rigor, as if the sodering of Parties, would be a throwing of all into the Fire, and the running of the whole into a shapeless and

The Non-conformists offered to Conform to Arch-Bishop Usher's Model.—

formless Lump. Many are boldly imposed upon into an ill Opinion of our Parliament, and composing Minds, as if they designed a Dissolution of Government; and indeed do, by their causeless Fears, discover the ill temper of our Cement, that if you do but touch our present Church Frame, it will be in danger of falling.

7. Some are warped from a Closure, by the influence of Self-love: They have Conformed, and are afraid of an after-condemnation for Conformity, and that the *Non-conformists* will come in as Victors, and be puffed up into an ostentation of their Refusal and Sufferings upon better Grounds and Principles. But Brotherly-love and Self-denial, which are so essential to Christianity, must be our Exercise, carrying on the common Salvation with one Heart and Shoulder.—But these two last named, will not be grieved at our Union, when it appears to be good.

Lastly,

Lastly ; Our many Breaches with God, is the great Gulf between. On the one hand, if Church-men would lay to Heart, and mourn for our Divisions, and clearly see whence they arise, and the great Loss to the Church at home, and Scandal to the Churches abroad, by the Ejection of so many able good Men, whom no other Nation could spare, and turn the Heat of Disputation into Love and Compassion, and spare themselves by not disgracing others, we might have more hopes. That Doctor (I conceal his Name, for he is fallen asleep) who saw *London-fire*, and was deeply affected with it, who after his return to his Place in the Country on the Fast following, reckoned this among the many Sins, and Judgments and Provocations of the Land, that many able Ministers were turned out of the Ministry, was in a right temper for a Solemn Fast, but was chidden and rated into Tears for his melting Charity, by his angry Diocesan. On the other Hand, when dissenting Christians, or Auditors, bring forth more Fruit under the unwearied Labours of their Preachers, and obey the Gospel of Christ, and can bless God for the many able publick Preachers, and receive the Faith and Word, without respect of Persons ; and be sorry for their Anger and evil-speaking, we may come to an Union, and see the Partition-Wall thrown down.

But surely our Legislators are too wise, and more resolved upon the most necessary Work of composing Differences, than to endanger the whole by a division of Parts ; to gratify these, I have named who are not of so much worth, as to compensate the loss of publick Church-Protestant-Peace for their sakes. —

2. The Case and Qualifications of the *Non-conformists*, is such, as no good Man of any Spirit should be afraid to own, by way of Intercession, or Solicitation for their readmission.

1. Those few that are yet alive, who were Men before the War, are as safe under the Healing Wings of the Act of Grace, as any other Men who needed that Protection as much as they, and have been placed as near the King and Court, as they have been driven from him. The greater is their Transgression, who peck at that Foundation of our Peace, and that tear that Covering from their Neighbours backs, in their Pulpits and Pamphlets.

2. They need no more Clemency, nor Pardons, since, than other Men, except for their Preaching.

3. They are admitted into the private Converse of the most eminent of all Qualities in the Land, except a few. Who can say of any of them, with such an one, no not to Eat ? Therefore they are admittable into a publick Station, where they can do more good, and less hurt, if doing hurt were their Design and Faculty, than in private. Me-thinks no

Man should be permitted to preach to five, and from five to five, from House to House, that may not be permitted to preach publicly : For may they with Safety, and Edification to Souls, preach to five at a time, why not to five hundred at a time ? Or if their preaching in publick be dangerous to the State and Church, is it not much more in private ? Our Priests and Jesuits have not perverted their boasted of Numbers in publick, but in private. Families are the Nurseries of Church and State ; corrupt them, and the poison is dispersed. Me-thinks it should not be at all lawful for *Non-conformists*, to preach to a number not exceeding five at once, or as lawful to preach in publick ; where if they were a Depraving, Heretical Sect of Men, (which they are not) but to be preferred before thousands that Officiate in the Land, they will be more wary and temperate, than to lose their Hearers, or hazard their Liberty, which they obtain with so much difficulty. Suppose twenty Non-conforming Ministers should keep strictly to their legal number of five ; these twenty Ministers preach to a hundred Citizens ; if these twenty should Lecture the hundred into Atheism, Blasphemy, Infidelity, Heresy, Sedition or Rebellion, would it be endured ? would not the Pestilence spread ? And that of the Mind is as quickly diffused, and as silently conveyed, as the *Plague* from Body to Body, and House to House. If they are Men of pernicious Principles, they are allowed too much ; if not, they are allowed too little. It is true, they have taken Liberty contrary to Law, to preach to greater Numbers, and have patiently born the Penalties, when inflicted. And by their adventuring, they have vindicated themselves, and testified to the Gospel which they believe, and stop'd the Mouths of many ; besides much good done upon many thousand Souls, that had been else neglected ; and declared to the World what manner of Men they are, what Doctrine they preach, and that they have not sowed Sedition, and ill Principles of Disloyalty and Treasons : And the many Years experience, and proof given of their Principles and Abilities, is not only an Apology for them, against them that judg them, *vel prejudicio nominis*, but furnish the Wise and Moderate with some Arguments to plead for reasonable Abatements for them.

4. They have done as much as any Men of their Degrees, to support and save the Nation, and the Protestant Profession, and as great a Terror to the Papists, as any of their number and quality in the Land : And I believe, if they thought that either Popery, or any Antichristian Sects should enter in by them, though they cannot conform to keep them out, by that, they would ask leave to remove into other Nations, rather than be a Door to let in Miseries upon their own.

5. They are Men of great Parts, Piety, and Prudence, sound Divines, good Preachers and Writers; no Man that knows their Persons, or their Labours, or their Writings, but ought to give them their due, without detraction from others. With what a sweet Spirit and Stile, Learning, Judgment, Argument, hath Mr. *Polehill* vindicated them, and the Doctrines of the Church, against Dr. *Sherlock's* Imputations?

6. Wise and great Men for Power, Place, Wisdom, and Experience in Affairs, both of Church and State, have endeavoured a Composition, though in vain: I should not be ashamed or afraid, to my best ability, to commend the Endeavours of but one Lord Keeper *Bridgman*; of but one Lord Chief Justice *Hales* (What would we have given for him since his Death?) of but one Bishop *Wilkins*, or either of the Deans of *Canterbury* and *Pauls*. But I have shewed how some of the sharpest Procurers of our Laws grew mild and gentle. But beside those venerable Persons, the Right Reverend Bishops, *Reynolds*, *Gawden*, were tenderly affected, as was Bishop *Earle*; and as the now most learned Bishop of *Chester*, as I have it from a good hand, the Bishop of *Hereford*, beside others, more than I can or will name, of eminent worth in the Church of *England*. And surely, rigor, and suppression of so sound a number of Ministers, doth neither become Men, as Wise, Experienced, Self-searchers, Charitable; or to descend below a Christian, it is not humane nor genteel. The more wise, experienced, self-acquainted, Christian, or genteel any Man is, the more moderate in Ceremonies, different Rites, and Impositions. [See the close of these Sheets.]

7. I never heard any Wise, Learned, good Man of the Church of *England*, justify their Ejection, nor approve of their Suppression; some have wished they would give way to the Wrath of angry Magistrates, either by abstaining from publick Preaching, or in time of Publick, that they might escape the edge of the Law.

8. It is no more to their prejudice that they are not all of the same mind, than that we are not all of a mind, no not in the point of Conformity it self.

9. To intercede for them, and their admission, is not to plead for turbulent, factious, schismatical Persons, that are insufferable. Make them one with us by a Law, and where is the Faction, and Schism? Suppose the King and Parliament for them, and against us; their way made legal, and ours as it is, only by a voluntary Profession, as tied up to it in Conscience, but without or against the Law; on whom would the charge of Schism fall? The Magistrates Favour and Law removes, or fastens the Crime. I know there is a Schism, and it is a great Sin, without respect to humane Laws; but he that endeavours to keep the Unity of the

the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, is no Schismatick, although he cannot come up to the Terms of Conformity. I have a tenderness in imputing Schism to any good Men, who cannot live and die in Sin; but if this be a sin, many good Men have died in it, never declaring their Repentance for their Non-conformity, or Preaching against the Prohibition of the Law. I do verily believe they were not only seemingly, but sincerely good Men; 'tis too hard to judg them dead in Sin.

10. They are Protestants; if they come not to that Test, reject them; they are peaceable, they are loyal, are true to the King according to Law, they have born their burden with us. Do we pray for the King, so do they, and for all that are in Authority, that under them they may lead peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness and honesty? Do we Fast? they do the same, with great importunity. Who more abundant in Labours than they? Who more Orthodox according to the Doctrines of the Church than they?—My Paper is almost at an end, and so am I.

Thus I have communicated my Thoughts with great plainness and truth. I shall say what was once spoken in Parliament. 'Let us first fear God, ' then shall we honour the King the more, for I am afraid we have been ' less prosperous in Parliaments, because we have preferred other Matters ' before him. Let Religion be our *Primum Querite*, for all things else are ' but *Et cetera's* to it, &c. [Sir Ben. Rudyer.]

And whether Exclusion of Papists, or Inclusion of Protestants be first endeavoured, is left to the Wisdom of my Superiors.—God prosper both.

For my Brethren and Companion's sake, I will now pray; *Peace be upon Israel.*

Violentis Consiliis, nec sanari mentes, nec tranquillitas Ecclesiæ restitui unquam poterit. [Phil. Melanch. ad Hen. 2. Fran. Reg.]

Quod si squamæ Leviathan ita cohæreant, ut earum opere textili densato, quasi Loricatus incedat Satan & Cataphractus, quod de fœdere Concordiæ, quâ malignantis Ecclesiæ Membra, se complexa, muniunt & circumvallent. Elegantissimè Lutherus & verè, cur immane quantum bient, obsecro, quasi ruinam Universæ Fabricæ minitantes, inbientq; quasi vasto fœdoq; rictu se devoraturi, vivi Lapides in vero Templo Collocati, &c.—inquit Dr. Stoughton. Epistola Elegantiss. cui Titulus, Felicitas ultimi Sæculi. p. 40.



Addenda.

I Will fill up these Sheets with some Royal Condescensions, and Episcopal Pleas, (besides those mentioned before) which I humbly entreat those in Authority, especially my Lords the Bishops, seriously to consider, in behalf of the *Non-conformists*, which may be found in his Majesty's Speeches and Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, and some of the Bishops own writing. And first observe what his present Majesty says concerning the *Non-conformists*, * &c.

In his Declaration of Ecclesiastical Affairs, *Octob. 25. 1660.* 'When 'We were in *Holland*, (says he) We were attended by many Grave and 'Learned Ministers from hence, who were looked upon as most able and 'principal Assertors of the Presbyterian Opinions, with whom We had as 'much Conference, as the multitude of Affairs, which were then upon 'Us, would permit Us to have; and to Our great satisfaction and comfort, found them Persons full of Affection to Us, of Zeal for the Peace 'of the Church and State, and neither Enemies (as they have been given out to be) to Episcopacy, or Liturgy, but mostly to desire such Alterations in either, as without shaking Foundations, might allay the present Distempers, which the Indisposition of the Time, and tenderness of 'some Mens Consciences had contracted. —

And concerning Ceremonies, *pag. 6.* he says, 'Now We do not think 'that Reverence We have for the *Church of England* in the least degree diminished by our Condescensions, not peremptorily to insist on some particulars of Ceremonies; which how-ever introduced by the Piety and 'Devotion, and order of former Times, may not be so agreeable to the 'present, but may even lessen that Piety and Devotion; for the improvement whereof, they might happily be first introduced, and consequently 'may well be *dispensed with*; and we hope this charitable Compliance of 'Ours, will dispose the minds of all Men to a cheerful submission to that 'Authority, the preservation whereof is so necessary for the Unity and 'Peace of the Church; and that they will believe the support of the
' Episcopal

‘Episcopal Authority, to be the best support of Religion, by being the means to contain the minds of Men within the Rules of Government. And *pag.* 16.—‘And therefore Our present Consideration and Work is, to gratify the private Consciences of those who are grieved with the use of some Ceremonies, by indulging to, and dispensing with, their omitting those Ceremonies. —

And *pag.* 7, 8.—‘As for what concerns the Penalties upon those who (living peaceably) do not conform thereunto, (*viz.* the Act of Uniformity) through scruple and tenderness of Conscience, but modestly without scandal perform their Devotions in their own way. We shall make it our special Care, so far forth as in us lies, without invading the freedom of Parliament to incline their Wisdom,—to concur with Us in the making some such Act for that purpose, as may enable Us to exercise with a more universal Satisfaction.—That Power of Dispensing which We conceive to be inherent in Us: Nor can We doubt of their chearful cooperating with us in a thing wherein we do conceive our selves so far engaged in Honour, and in what we owe to the Peace of our Dominions; which We profess We can never think secure, whilst there shall be a colour left to the Malicious and Disaffected, to inflame the minds of so many Multitudes upon the score of Conscience, with despair of ever obtaining any effect of our Promises for their Ease.

And in his Speech to both Houses of Parliament, *Feb.* 10. 1667. saith He, — ‘One thing more I hold my Self obliged to recommend unto you at this present; which is, That you would seriously think of some course to beget a better Union and Composure in the minds of my Protestant Subjects, in Matters of Religion; whereby they may be induced, not only to submit quietly to the Government, but also chearfully give their assistance to the support of it.

And in his Speech to both Houses, *Nov.* 9. 1678. He saith, ‘I meet you here with the most earnest desire that Man can have, to unite the Minds of all my Subjects, both to *Me*, and to *one another*; and I resolve it shall be your Fault, if the Success be not suitable to my Desires. — Besides, that end of Union which I aim at, (and which I wish could be extended to Protestants Abroad, as well as at Home): I purpose by this last step I have made, to discern whether the Protestant Religion, and the Peace of the Kingdom, be as truly aimed at by others, as they are really intended by Me. —

Some Bishops formerly, and of late, have most pathetically pleaded the Case of the *Non-conformists*, whose Apostolical Zeal and Charity are worthy the Consideration and Imitation of the present Bishops and Fathers of our Church at this Time especially. A former Bishop of *St. Davids*, in the
Convocation

Convocation-House, May 23. 1604. — speaking of those who were scrupulous only upon some Ceremonies, &c. 'Being otherwise Learned, studious, grave, and honest Men, whose Labours have been painful in the Church, and profitable to their several Congregations, (he says) tho I do not justify their Doings, yet surely their Service would be missed at such a Time, as need shall require them and us to give the right hand of Fellowship one to another, and to go Arm in Arm against the common Adversary that so there might be *Vis unita fortior*.—If these our Brethren aforesaid should be deprived of their Places, for the Matters premised, I think we should find cause to bend our Wits to the uttermost extent of our skill to provide some Cure of Souls for them, where they may exercise their Talents.— Furthermore, if these Men, being divers hundreds, (as it is bruited abroad) should forsake their Charges, (as some do presuppose they will) who, I pray you, should succeed them ? — Besides this, for so much as in the Life-time of the late Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, these things were not so extreemly urged, but that many Learned Preachers enjoyed their Liberty herein, conditionally that they did not by Word or Deed openly disgrace or disturb the State established ; I would know a Reason, why it should not be so generally and exceeding strictly called upon, especially considering these Men are now the more necessary, by so much as we see greater encrease of Papists to be now of late, than were before. To conclude, I wish, that if by Petition made to the King's Majesty, there cannot be obtained a quite remove of the Premises, which seem so grievous to divers, nor yet a Toleration for them which be of the more staid and temperate carriage, yet at the least, there might be procured a mitigation of the Penalty, if they cannot be drawn by other Reasons to a Conformity with us. Thus far this Bishop in those days, when the Terms of Conformity were not so hard.

The present Lord Bishop of *Hereford*, in his *Naked Truth*, with hearty Compassion and Zeal, pleads the Case of our present *Non-conformists*, both with the (then) two Houses of Parliament, and the Bishops in particular.— First, In his Address to the Lords and Commons in general, he thus expresses himself ; ' My Lords and Noble Gentlemen, you have fully expressed your Zeal to God, and his Church, in making Laws for Unity, &c. I call God, the searcher of all Hearts, the God of Life and Death, to witness, That I would most readily, yea, most joyfully sacrifice all I have in this World, my Life and all, that all *Nonconformists* were reduced to our Church ; but it falls out most sadly, that your Laws have not the desired effect, our Church is more and more divided, &c.— And concludes, with earnest Prayers, ' That God would direct them to that which may make for the *Unity* of our Church, by yeelding to weak Ones, &c. —

And in pag. 10. (Edition in *Folio*) he thus earnestly and seriously Addresses him to the Bishops; 'My Reverend Fathers and Judges of the Church, I (with *St. Paul, Col. 3.*) beseech you put on fatherly *bowels of Mercies, Kindness, humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering* towards your poor weak Children; and so long as they hold fast the Body of Christ, be not so rigorous with them for Shadows; if they submit to you in Substance, have patience, tho they do not submit in Ceremonies: and give me leave to tell you my poor Opinion; This violent pressing of Ceremonies hath (I humbly conceive) been a great hinderance from embracing them, Men fearing your Intentions to be far worse than really they are, and therefore abhor them.—

And pag. 11. — 'This force-urging Uniformity in Worship, hath caused great division in Faith, as well as Charity; for had you, by abolishing some Ceremonies, taken the weak Brethren into your Church, they had not wandred about after seducing Teachers, nor fallen into so many gross Opinions of their own.— Now I beseech you, in the fear of God, set before your Eyes the dreadful Day of Judgment, when Christ in his Tribunal of Justice shall require an account of every Word and Deed, and shall thus question you: Here are several Souls, who taking offence at *your* Ceremonies, have forsaken my Church, have forsaken the Faith, have run into Hell, the Souls for which I shed my precious Blood; Why have you suffered this? Nay, why have you occasioned this? Will you Answer, It was to preserve *our* Ceremonies? Will not Christ return unto you, Are *your* Ceremonies more dear unto you than the Souls for which I died? Who hath required these things at your hands? Will you, for Ceremonies, which you your selves confess to be indifferent, no way necessary unto Salvation, suffer your weak Brethren to perish, for whom I died? Have not I shewed you how *David and his Souldiers were guiltless in eating the Shew-bread, which was not lawful but only for the Priests to eat*? If David dispensed with a Ceremony commanded by God, to satisfy the hunger of his People, Will not you dispencc with *your own* Ceremonies to satisfy the Souls of my People, who are called by my Name, and profess my Name, tho in weakness? Or will you tell Christ, they ought to suffer for their own wilfulness and perverseness, who will not submit to the Laws of the Church as they ought? Will not Christ return, Shall they perish for transgressing *your* humane Laws, which they ignorantly conclude Erroneous, And shall not you perish for transgressing my Divine Laws, which you know to be Good and Holy? Had I mercy on you, and should not you have mercy on you fellow Servants? With the same measure you meted, it shall be measured unto you again: I tremble to go farther, but most humbly beseech you, for Christ's sake, endeavour to regain these

'strayed

‘strayed Sheep, for which he shed his precious Blood, and think it as great
 ‘an advantage, as great an honour to you, as it was to St. Paul, to become
 ‘all things to all Men, that you may gain some, as doubtless you will ma-
 ‘ny, tho not all; and the few standers off will be the more convinced,
 ‘and at long running wearied out and gained also.

I close this Bishop’s earnest Requests, with one of the Prayers made by
 the Bishops, for the late Fast on *Decemb. 22. 1680.* appointed by the King’s
 Proclamation, (among other ends) to *Unite the Hearts of all Loyal Pro-*
testants, (and I hope my Lords the Bishops will join their sincere endea-
 vours with this devout Prayer.) *Viz.*

For Union among our Selves.

Blessed Jesu, our Saviour, and our Peace; who didst shed thy precious Blood
 upon the Cross, that thou might’st abolish, and destroy all Enmity among
 Men, and reconcile them in one Body unto God: Look down in much pity and
 compassion upon this distressed Church, and Nation; who’s bleeding Wounds, oc-
 casion’d by the lamentable Divisions that are among us, cry aloud for thy speedy
 Help, and saving Relief. Stir up, we beseech thee, every Soul of us, carefully
 (as becomes sincere Christians) to root out of our Hearts all Pride, and Vain-
 glory, all Wrath and Bitterness, all unjust Prejudice and causeless Jealousy, all
 Hatred and Malice, and desire of Revenge, and whatsoever it is, that may any
 way exasperate our Minds, or hinder us from discerning the things that belong
 unto our Peace: And by the Power of thy Holy Spirit of Peace, dispose all our
 Hearts to such meekness of Wisdom, and lowliness of Mind, such calm and de-
 liberate Long-suffering, and Forbearance of one another in Love, with such due
 esteem of those, whom thou hast set over us to watch for our Souls, as may turn
 the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Hearts of the Children to the
 Fathers; that so we may become a ready People prepar’d to live in Peace, and the
 God of Peace may be with us. To this End, give us all Grace, O Lord, seriously
 to lay to heart, not only the great Dangers we are in at present by these unhappy
 Divisions, but also the great Obligations to this godly Union, and Concord,
 which lie upon us: That as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of
 our Calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, and Father of all;
 so we may henceforth be all of one Heart, and of one Soul, closely united in one holy
 bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity; and may with one Mind, and
 one Mouth glorify thee, O Lord, the Prince of Peace, who with thy blessed Father,
 in the Unity of the Holy Spirit, livest, and reignest ever one God World without
 end. Amen.

Handwritten text at the top left corner, partially cut off.

His Majesties Declaration from *Breda*, April 14. 1660.

— We do declare a Liberty to tender Consciences; and that no Man shall be disquieted, or called in question for Differences of Opinion in Matters of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom; And that We shall be ready to Consent to such an Act of Parliament, as upon mature Deliberation shall be offered to Us for the full granting that Indulgence.

House of Commons, Jan. 10. 1680.

Resolved, That it is the Opinion of this House, That the Prosecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the Penal Laws, is at this time grievous to the Subject, a weakning the Protestant Interest, an encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom.

THE
Conformist's second Plea
FOR THE
Nonconformists.

WHEREIN

The Case of the *Non-Conformists* is further stated; and the Suspension of the Penal Laws against them, humbly moved with all due submission to the Magistrate.

By a Charitable and Compassionate Conformist:
Author of the former P L E A.

Edward Pearce

Sed neque Imperiale est Libertatem dicendi denegare, neque Sacerdotale quod sentiat non dicere. S. Ambros. ad Theodos. Ep. 29.

— There hath been left, for any thing I find to the contrary, in all well-govern'd Politics, a kind of latitude more or less, and power in the Magistrates, even in those Courts that were *Strictissimi Juris*, upon fit occasion to qualify and mitigate something the Rigor of the Laws by the Rules of Equity. Bp *Sanderson's Sermons*, 1 Vol. p. 112. *Ad Magistratum.*

L O N D O N, Printed by J. D. for Jonathan Robinson, at
the Golden Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1632.

THE

FOR THE

INFORMATION

The first of the three volumes in this series is devoted to the history of the subject; and the second volume is devoted to the history of the subject; and the third volume is devoted to the history of the subject.

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To all that are entrusted with the Administration of Justice, and Conservation of the Peace, by what Title soever they are honoured;

The Charitable and Compassionate Conformist, doth most humbly present these Papers.

Noble and Worshipful ;

NO Cause can come before you, wherein you are so nearly concerned, as you are sincere Protestants, than in this of the Dissenting Protestants, because your Religion is touched and concerned in it ; you cannot hurt that in any sound part of the Professors of it, tho in a few things differing from you, but very sensibly, one of you must be affected with it ; and what you do to them, you do to your selves, and your own Religion, except you account Life, and Soul, and Body, to be nothing without Formalties. As you are Gentlemen of noble Birth and Education, and as Persons of Estates, and of Hospitality, of Wisdom, Justice, and Experience, you are most obliged with all Skill, Judgment, Tenderness, Mercy and Impartiality to give your selves true Information, in the state and deserts of this great Matter ; and so to proceed with them, as shewing a Copy of those Characters of Vertue, impressed upon your Spirits in your Proceedings with them. As Gentlemen by Birth and Blood, your Extraction derives to you the most amiable Qualities, and purest Endowments of human Nature ; this Extract of noble Nature sublimated by ingenuous (much more by pious and christian) Education, must needs dispose you to a nobler kind of Behaviour, and a greater Benignity, than inferiour Persons of a coarser and more mixed Metal. A truly vertuous Gentleman, comes nearest to the true gracious Christian : but when the true Gentleman is become a true Christian, then even Encmies and Offenders, may expect much more than Humanity from him. You are not troubled with Parricides, Murderers, and Robbers, not with obstinate Hereticks, nor with perjured Persons, (but such as fear an Oath) nor traiterous equivocating Jesuits, when the Nonconformists are brought before you, but with Men of an ingenuous Education, and what they want of a noble Birth, they have made up in the better sort of natural Endowments, improved by liberal Education, advanced by Grace, and preferred to be the Ministers of God, and therefore in a sort your Equals ; as in other respects your Inferiours, and therefore worthy to be treated with a due respect. They may expect from you the highest Civility, patient hearing, the calmest Arguing, Courtesie and Condescension, and an extreame unwillingness to ad nigh to a Rigor. You should sooner from a Generosity proper to your Degree, give them what they want, than take from them the little which they have ; and be as much troubled to send them to a Prison, as to be sent into one your selves. He that

The Preface.

can easily be severe, or cruel, hath put off Humanity, and doth act with great Negligence and Forgetfulness, and is so far unfit to act. If a Man be a Prisoner of War, at the Mercy of a Gentleman, the Gentleman considering what he is himself, acts like himself, and useth him as a distressed Friend, that was but a while before, an open Enemy. The Nonconformists for whom I plead, are your own, if you please to think them so, and you may with as much ease, and more honour, with less trouble, and more safety, and comfort, make them your own, than disown, and use them as tho they were your Enemies. As Ministers, they have chosen a Calling which the Prince of Darkness hates, and persecutes; they need your Countenance and Succor, against the Powers of Darkness; their business in the World, is rightly to inform, to better and save the World; they deserve your Assistance and Prayers for success. Had they chosen a secular way of Life, they might with the same Education and Parts, have filled and adorned other Seats as well as the Pulpit; had they all turned Physicians, Lawyers, States-men, as some have done, or to other Trades and Arts, they might have had a greater Plenty, without disturbance, Dangers, Losses, or Indignities: But shall all these Miseries and Afflictions come upon them, First, Because they cannot change and desert their Calling? Next, because they cannot be idle or unprofitable in it? Consider, and compare them dishonoured and afflicted, with your honoured selves: Are you Christians? so are they; are you Scholars? so are they: are you Gentlemen? they come not far behind you; are you Protestant Magistrates? they are Protestant Ministers: The difference between you is, you are in Power, and they are out of Favour: I will not so far dishonour you, as to compare you with those infamous, broken, ravenous, vile sort of Men, that witness against them. If I may not be pardoned those Epithets, I will prove that, and much more, of many of them. But noble Sirs, how much beneath you is it, as Men of Honour, to give Countenance to many of such, as are not fit to come within your Doors, except to receive Justice from you, against any that have the unstained repute of honest Men, only because they are Preachers of our same common Faith. But noble Gentlemen, let me compare the Informers, and them against whom they witness (and for whom I plead;) the one is a Teacher of the way of Life, the other is ignorant, or walks in the way of Darkness; the one makes Conscience of an Oath, and of his Word, but the other knows not what an Oath is, and fears not to be sworn (I say nothing in this Opposition Oratorically, but truly and upon Proof) the one studies, knows, and performs his Duty to God, and his King, and to all Men according to his Knowledge; the other knows neither, and makes no Conscience (in appearance) of either: he is for the King and you, but as he is for the Devil, for what he can get by his Service; he is ungodly and profane, a daily Transgressor of the King's Laws, as well as God's; and more than one have been cut off by the Sword of Justice, having first been rejected by all honest Men; the one lives a poor contented Life, praying for his King, and for all orders of Men, and praising God, fares hard, and goes meanly, whilst

The Preface.

whilst the other runs in debt, cheats his Creditors, swears and damns, and robs on the High-way, or breaks open Houses. In a word, the one walks in the way of Godliness and Honesty, and labours to draw others with him; the other neither goes in himself, nor suffers others to enter that would. And behold, and be astonished ye Heavens at this! the one is in danger of losing all he hath, and suffering because he hath no more to lose, for labouring to save Souls; and the other hopes to be rewarded with a third part of many of his Neighbours Goods. A surer way it is to turn Informer, than play the Thief, or cheat his Creditors; but all hath not done their Work: the end of many hath been according to their Work! All this is spoken of some of them. You are Gentlemen of Estates, and cannot think that the ruine of thousands of Traders, Farmers, Tenants, yea the impoverishing of many of good Condition, can be a Service to the Common-wealth. If you do not suffer an immediate Loss, yet hundreds will, and what is a Loss to so great a part, will be an impairing of the whole. That great States-man, Sir Walter Rawleigh, in the Parliament 35th of Elizab. spake these Words: I am afraid there is near 20000 of them (the Brownists) in England, and when they are gone, who shall maintain their Wives and Children? Had there been but 20000 Dissenters in England, they had been rooted out before now, if some had prevailed! But who shall maintain a far greater number of Wives and Children, when their Husbands and Parents are undone by the Penal Laws? And who will get by it? not the King; his third part, if come into his Exchequer, will not countervail the loss of his Subjects. What have the Poor got this many Years? or what have they got, that could neither keep, nor get, nor pay their Debts, before they took to Informing?

As many of you as are Gentlemen of Hospitality, relieve many poor at your Doors, or other-where; can you think it a Charity to relieve Beggars? and issue Warrants to make many Beggars; that either cannot dig, or beg, or that keep many to their Labours, that else would beg? that bear their Burdens in the Common wealth, and are no burden to it!

Your Place and Office requireth Wisdom. And I may be bold to say, That the Renowned Sir Matthew Hale, was as wise, as strict, as just, as able a Lawyer as the ablest of you all that keep the Chair; it is no disparagement of the learnedest and gravest of you all, to take him for an Example, whose Moderation towards Dissenters is a part of his noble Character; you have known what hath been the concurring sense of all our Parliaments since 1672.

Historic. Collect. &c.
of the 4 last Parliaments of Q. Eliz. p. 76,
by Mr. Townshend.

See his Life, by Dr.
Gibbert Burnet.

If none of these shall be your Precedents, I beseech you be pleased to consider, it is your Wisdom to understand the Duty of your Places, and the Matters that are brought

brought before you; especially in Cases that concern the Liberties, Livelihoods, and Estates of many thousands in the Land. I humbly conceive you cannot with a clear Conscience, proceed against the Dissenters, except you understand, 1. The matters for which they suffer, and that you may see in several Writings. 2. Attend to the scope and reasons of the Acts, upon which you proceed. 3. Distinguish between Preacher and Preacher, between the sound and the unsound; and other Circumstances, and choose rather to give up your Commissions, than to act against God, and your Conscience, by punishing Well-doing, as if it were Evil doing. That Preaching and Praying which tends to Men's Salvation, and to no evil end; either to the King, or his Government, cannot be punished safely, without being accessary to the evil Intentions of those designing Men, who were the Politick Promoters of these Laws, notwithstanding great obstruction of true Godliness, and of a most desirable Union among Protestants. 4. You ought not to act like meer Machines, or irrational Instruments; If so, the Weak and the Rash, that can but write their Names to a Warrant, or a Mittimus, might be as fit as you, for your Offices: but as Men of Understanding, Wisdom, Conscience and Religion; and if the Laws are hard, and too severe for meer Nonconformity, be Intercessors with the King and Parliament, for his Subjects, and your fellow Christians.

As Just Men Try the fitness of the Witnesses, whether they are Boni & Legales: Punish not Religious Assemblies of peaceable Men, under the odious names of Routs and Riots; and let not the sound, profitable, and peaceable Preachers, be ruined with a measure of Punishment, only due to the turbulent and rebellious. And if by many Years Experience, you find no Sedition or Disturbance to the Kingdom, only to the minds of some that are too controversially disposed to Passion and Contention, or if you find it only to be a Schism, a Church-matter, leave it to the Church-Men to judge it according to their Law. If you maintain the Civil Peace, you are happy Instruments in the Government, and what more is required of you?

Noble and honoured Gentlemen, I do not presume to dedicate this as to Patrons, but humbly offer and submit the Reason and Argument to your Consideration, and suggest two things. 1. If we believe a Catholick Church, of the same Faith, in different Forms and Modes, why shall not our Fellow-Subjects and Natives, professing that Faith in a different Form, share in your Charity, as parts of the Catholick Church? To love them, Christians of the Catholick Church, and of the same Faith, with our National Churches, all things; and yet punish them that preach Catholick Doctrine, and observe all the Ordinances of the Catholick Church, is an odd kind of Love and Charity. 2. If there among us that are holy, sanctified Preachers, and Hearers, they shall be saved in that day: You know the Process of that great day of Judgment, for what Causes the unrighteous shall be condemned: — I was naked, and ye clothed me not; in Prison, and ye visited me not: Mat. 25. 43. O how will it agree with this, to say, I was in Power, and I executed the Laws, to distress of Goods, and Imprisonment, to Banishment, to Abjuration? How will it sound in that Day, I was in Prison, and ye committed me; I was banished, and ye banished me; I was impoverished, and ye impoverished me; what ye did to the Preachers whom I sent, yet did to me: — When you shall be judged, what will you plead, or can you pray, Thy Kingdom come, and obstruct the coming of it, to any People in any part of the Land? If there be nothing in what I humbly offer, reject it? if there be any Conviction in any thing, be pleased to consider of it.

Philagathus.



T H E

Conformist's second Plea

F O R T H E

NON-CONFORMISTS.



IT must be confessed that there is some turpitude in all Apologies, either imputed or committed. To Preface a Book with an Apology, when the matter is good, is to put a foul face upon a good matter; but then, it is a foul face only in some Men's Eyes, which are diseased, and will appear, if not beautiful, yet tolerably handsom, to the eye of them, that look for nothing perfect and free from humane frailty, and that make daily use of a Towel, and fair Water themselves. Plead for my self I must, and I shall make some requests with my Pleas, that so if I may not come off without guilt and blame, I may come off with my Pardon.

I did not think the Reverend Non-Conformists so few or weak, as to need an Advocate, in some things, of another Judgment, and so far, of the other side; for as they are most sensible of their own condition, so they can both rationally, and pathetically, open and plead their own Cause, and in my mind, they have said a great deal to purpose, if after all, it will be to purpose. I am sure had I been one of them, I could not have said for them, what they have done. But knowing how ill they are represented, I was resolved in what I could to do them right, and therein to express my Compassion, proportionable to my Religion, which as such, is not confined, but Catholick: and if my Charity and Compassion must extend to all, that call on the Name of the Lord Jesus, I am certain I must shew it to them, whom I take to be sound in Faith and Worship, and whom I have known, and heard, and by whose Works I may profit, if I have not. My request to them is, that they would believe there are many in the Church of *England*, that wish an Union, they with us, and we with them, and it must needs be so in all them that are animated by the same

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Holy

Holy-Spirit of Truth, Faith, and Love. I do also beg their pardon, that I have pleaded for them with no more Life and Strength.

I do understand and I easily believe, that many of the Reverend Conforming Church-Men are offended, that a *Conformist* should plead for the *Non-Conformists*: It hath seemed to some almost incredible, and to look like a Cheat, or a Jesuit in Masquerade. I am glad I am not to be tried by Judges of that Complexion, by whom I am condemned at the very first sight of the Title Page, and that it hath found Approbation from them, whom I take to be of a better Temper.

Before I plead, I do humbly beg their Pardon and Excuse, who have been dishonoured by the Suspicion of being the Authors of the Plea for the *Non-Conformists*, by my concealment of my Name. It hath been a greater Honour to me, than I ever expected or thought of, that it hath passed under some very Reverend Names; but it is a Dishonour to them, to be counted the Fathers of such a Birth, which represents neither their Strength nor Statures, neither Feature nor Speech. These worthy Men may vindicate themselves with one Negative, but I cannot undeceive the Inquirers without running upon considerable Trouble and Temptations. I perceive the Injury is so common, that I cannot without a greater, distrust their Pardoning Ingenuity. —

Having said this, I next put in my Apology. That Book was fitly called the *Conformist's Plea*, because it becomes the *Conformist* to read and weigh the Case; and having done so, to be righteous and compassionate, to be a good Instrument between his Mother and his Brethren at such a time, when ill Agents pass between them; and because the greatest Authorities he hath used, have been eminent Fathers or Sons of the Church of *England*. Why should it seem strange to any Man, in such an Age as this, when many that seem Enemies to Popery, yet plead for Papists? Why should it seem strange, that one should labour to prepare the Hearts of Men of the same Faith to meet, or to receive Dissenting Protestants into Church-Communion with them, by opening the hardness of their Case, the Worthiness of their Persons, and of their Ministerial Abilities, Soundness of their Faith, Exemplary Morals, peaceable Demeanour, &c. Why should it offend any Man, that I should pen their Case, and testify for them, when we all, that have any sense, bewail our Divisions, and from thence fore-tell our Destruction, and profess a desire of Union, tho upon different Terms? How many in the Land do declaim against their Principles and Practises, and are ready to raise a Wind, if it were in their Power, to carry them away, that know neither the Men, nor their declared Principles! Is it not necessary, first to remove Prejudices, and next, to beget good Thoughts of them, in all that through unacquaintance with.

with them, or Disaffection towards them, before ever we can either desire, or admit an Union with them? It is a good preparation for an intire, affectionate Closure to shew how near they come to us, what Abatements other great and excellent Men would have made, had they had the management of Church-Affairs in our Days, and what Concessions they formerly thought fit to make; and more especially in a time when the great Counsellours and Trustees of our Peace and Liberties, have unanimously voted for a Legal Union, or that which, is to some a hateful Word, *Comprehension*. It is most unlike a Minister of Christ, and a Member of a Christian Reformed Church, to kick and spurn at Protestant Brethren, that would gladly come into the Arms of a Legal Constitution, upon no other terms and by no other ways, than such as Wisdom shall find out, and the Government resolve upon, for the Honour of Christ and his Religion, and the safety of the Church. In vain do we use the names of Unity and Peace, and Uniformity, and yet at the same time, in the same Discourses, revile and bear false witness against our Brethren. To commend Peace and dislike fair Proposals, is flatly to hate Peace; to commend Peace, and with Tongues and Pens to persecute them with whom the Peace is to be made, is a Method for Peace which I never learned. To invite Men to my House, and keep the Doors shut, as against Thieves and Contentious Persons that will never be quiet, or that are not fit to be trusted in it, is such a kind of Civility and Complement, that can never gain upon any Man of sense. I put off my Hat to them with a seeming Humility and Love, and say, I pray you come in out of the Wind and Rain, and in the mean time prepare neither Room nor Entertainment for them, but think my House a great deal better without than with them, is as much as to say, Be gone, or come in upon such hard terms, for which they must give Bond and Oath, which they cannot yield to. Will a Man that hath any Brains in him, receive troublesome Persons into his House? or contract with perfidious Persons, that will eat him out and betray him? or espouse a Woman that he takes to be an ill-conditioned, contentious, unprofitable Brawler? We must ground our Agreements upon some rational Confidences. And therefore that I might not only pray for Protestant-Christian Peace and Union, I used such means as were within my narrow Compass; and I could not think of any better, than briefly to state the Case, and commend the Persons, whose Establishment I do heartily desire, as they with whom we may safely, and comfortably communicate in the same Offices, or at least quietly endure to live with us in the same Nation, or worship God in Christ, as in an outward Court of the Temple, tho not in the Body of it, or at the Altar. If the Gentiles were not admitted into the inward Court, they had the allowance of an outward Court,

The Conformist's Second Plea

they were not forbidden to come into *Jerusalem*, or any Town where the *Sanhedrim* was held. But our *Non-Conformist* Brethren may approach with us even to the Altar, if they be but taken in upon such Terms, as Christ and his Apostles would have admitted them upon, yea upon Principles declared by our first glorious Reformers. And shall it be a Crime in a *Conformist* to say so, to speak Truth in Love? They earnestly plead with the Keepers of the Keyes, For Christ's sake take us in! They plead with the power of the Sword, For the Lord's sake smite us not, destroy us not, for we are Friends. To the one they say, We would live in Peace and Love with you, we would glorify God with one Mouth with you, we would not be as Strangers and Enemies. To the other they say, We will stand on your side, we will live and dy with you. But some that watch at the door, and some that stand Sentinel, and are upon the Guard, cry, Who are ye? Whence come ye? What would you have? Is it not a good Service in me, or any other that are within, that know the Men, and have heard or read their Offers, to declare who they are, and what they offer? I look upon it as great an Act of Charity to many in the Church (of which I am a Member) as to them, to make a true report of the things I have written, and towards a Reception, to repeat the Heads of some former Debates and Consultations for Concord, and what hath been the Judgment of, and to what some Worthies of former times have condescended.—

But who hath hired you? or feed you for your Plea?

From this and the like false Accusations, I appeal to my JUDGE in Heaven, and my Witness within, and defy the World round about me, of being as much as privy to any such designed work; yet I have my Reward on Earth. The Tearers of the Church have made at me, as invisible as I am, but mistaking their Hold, have hurt their Nails and Fingers, whilst I escape. The Admirers of Innovations have cut me out a new Livery, which shews the Uniformity they affect, dressed one in a Jesuit's long Robes, and a *Scotish* blew Bonnet; but from others I have the Reward of Thanks, Prayers, and Encouragements to proceed, from the good Acceptation of the former part. And if none of my fellow Servants would acknowledg my Kindness, I hope my Master will, whose I am, and whom I serve. And if some of my Mother's Sons look upon me, as having nothing of her, because I am not like them to an Hair, and wonder who I take after; I would they should know, I take after the Candor and Ingenuity of Heathens and Papists, overcome with the Light and Truth towards Christians, and in their Language, condemned Hereticks; and after the Charity of *Conformists* towards *Puritans* and *Non-Conformists* in former times; and so this part of my Apology shall be,

1. The imitable Examples of Heathens towards Christians.
2. Of *Papists* towards miscalled Hereticks, our fore-runners in the Truth and Faith.
3. Of conforming Defenders of the Church of *England*, towards Dissenters of former and latter times.*

And if it be said, *That none of these did plead the Cause of their Adversaries, as I have done.* I say,

1. The condition of the Times require it.
2. Their Case will bear it.
3. General inclinations to Peace have opened an opportunity for it.

1. Shall not a Christian speak as well of a Christian, who is of the same Father, Faith and Family, as an Heathen of a Christian? Shall not a Christian Minister do more than a Christian Man, for the honour of Christianity? Who hath taught us to expose serious Professors of the Christian Faith, to the condemnation and wrath of the ignorant and angry people? or to the jealousy of the Potent? What is commendable in them, ought to be commended; and that should be commended in them, which is commendable in us. And what is excusable in them, ought not to be exposed as damnable and intolerable. The Christian Qualities, Graces and Vertues, should be acknowledged, and not disowned, because they are in a Nonconformist. The Piety, due Obedience, Sobriety, Usefulness, diligence in Hearing and Preaching the Word, yea and tenderness of Conscience, which they profess and shew, ought to be kindly respected; and the common infirmities of Men, rather covered, for the sake of those undoubted Graces; than these Graces to be suspected, because we do not affect the Men.

Tertullian in his Dissuasive to *Scapula*, the President of *Africa*, from Persecution, [*ad Scapul. c. 4.*] doth move him by the good opinion and commendation of the Emperor *Severus* (Father of *Antoninus*) who did not only shew favour to *Torpacion*, who had cured him with Oil, and kept him in his Palace while he lived; but knowing some famous Women and some famous Men to be of this Sect, (so the Christians were called, a Sect, or, a new Sect, by way of contempt) he did not only not hurt them, but adorned and honoured them with his Testimony, and did also openly resist (or keep off) the common people raging against them. But most famous is that full Testimony which *Pliny* the 2d gave to *Trajan*, of the Religion and Manners of the Christians, 'That he found nothing by them but their obstinacy in refusing to sacrifice; and that they met before day to sing to God and Christ, to consent in the exercise of Christian Discipline; forbidding Murder, Adultery, Deceit, Treachery, and other Wickednesses: *Tertul. ad Scapulam. cap. 4. edit. Pamellii id. Apologetico cap. 2.* If an Heathen.

then Governour, entrusted with the execution of Laws upon the Christians (in *Pontus* and *Bithynia*) gave such a Testimony of them, which was in effect to be more an Advocate for them, than a Judge upon them; what may be allowed to a Protestant Minister,

Vid. Vossii Comment. in Epist. Plin. de Christi- Persecutionum. p. 5, 6, 7.

pleading for Protestant Ministers and People? of whose Religion and Manners much more may be said, than *Pliny* could say of those Saints of God, had he set himself to plead their Cause with his charming Rhetorick.

2. I will imitate a Vertue in an Enemy, what is good in an ill Man. Let others frame their Tongues to defaming Names and *Anathemas*, after the rigorous and bitter *Papists*, I rather chuse to undergo the Censures of the Angry, without cause, than be overcome, or condemned by the ingenuity of *Papists* towards our Predecessors in the same Faith. What ample Testimonies have many of the *Papists* given of the *Waldenses*, altho condemned of Heresy, by their Canons, may be seen in *Du Plessis Historia Papatus*, out of *Rainerius*, and in Arch-Bishop *Usher's de Successione & Statu*, out of the same *Rainerius*, and other Inquisitors, and their spiteful Enemies the *Dominicans*, being overcome with the Light of Truth, and Beauty of their Life and Manners, have

Edit. Lond. 1613. c. 6. §. 11. §. 15, 20. &c. fuse per totum Caput.

not concealed what we ought to esteem a Glory. *Aeneas Sylvius* writes as much to their disgrace as any scornful Enemy could do, who in his Journey to *Prague* taking in at *Tabor* (looking upon it as more safe to lodg with them than in the open Villages amongst the *Papists*) was with his Company gladly received by them, and received the right of Hospitality. He hated them to that degree, that he chose to neglect Divine Offices on the Lord's-Day, lest he should communicate with Hereticks; and in his return, being overcome with the importunity of his Company, to return thither to bait, he would neither eat nor drink while he was in the City; yet he gives us the Heads of their Religion in opposition to the *Roman* Apostacy, which is such, as every true Protestant must subscribe to for the most part. And the ill Reports he gives of their degenerate Manners, he took upon

Vid. Inter Waldensia, &c. opera Balthar. Lydii; Aeneas Sylvii Historiam Bohemicam. P. 371, & 373. Rotterdam. 1612.

trust from his Host, who secretly kept the Images of *Christ* and the *Virgin Mary*, and would have fallen from them, but for the love of his Riches. And shall we take these Reports for true of them, which he, an incensed Adversary, afterwards a Pope, received from a secret *Papist*, and an Hypocrite? There are too many in *England*, from their Ignorance, Prejudice, or Malignity, will speak as ill of our worthy *Nonconformists*; but let us who know them, and should esteem them

as the Servants of God, and our Fellow-Servants, write and speak with Tenderness, Truth, and Modesty.

3. To come nearer home, and the Point in hand. Many learned and peaceable Conforming Divines, when they wrote of them, or wrote against them, have given them an honourable Report; especially when the *Papists* have upbraided the Church of England with *Puritans*, as now they do with our *Divisions*. Mr. *Francis Mason*, the learned Defender of the Ministry of the Church of England, speaks so modestly and kindly of the *Nonconformists**, that he

* *Churches Power to make Canons.*

insinuates a good opinion, or a kindness into the heart of his Reader in that Book, wherein he labours to satisfy or confute them. With a like temper did Dr. *Sparkes* handle the *Persuasive to Conformity*. What ample and fair Characters doth the ingenuous and honest Dr. *Fuller* give of Mr. *Cartwright*, *Travers*, *Udal*, *Huldersham*, *Dod*, &c. in his Church-History of Britain? And long before him, we may read (what some of our learned and eminent *Conformist* Divines have imitated) the Honour which some great Doctors of *Cambridg*, and among them Dr. *Fulk*, gave to Mr. *Cartwright*, perswading him to confute the *Rhemists* Testament, printed before that worthy Work of his. I will content my self with one Example more of this temper, a Learned Man beyond all exception, the great Doctor *Crakenthorp*, whom I rather cite, first, because he professed himself, and was acknowledged by the Bishops to be a Moderate Protestant, but no *Puritan*. 2. Because he reckons many of the *N. C. Puritans*, who suffered either Deprivation or Suspension, or more, for their Nonconformity, and blames them for that fault: *Utinam errorem suum & cernere voluissent & deponere*. — For otherwise certainly (said he to *Marc. Anton. de Dominis*, *A. B. of Spalato*) there is hardly none of them to which any of you is to be compared, for Goodness or Holiness of Life; and even for Learning, you your self (who are a Master in your *Israel*) are not to be compared with some of them. The greater was the unhappiness of that Breach, which was made by Injunctions and Scruples. I never thought them good Painters who draw the Pictures of the Dissenting Brethren with Dirt and Soot: but I knowing them to be unlike those Pictures, have with a just offence beheld their Injuries; and would have been pleased to have seen them described by some impartial and skilful Master, as fit to adorn the Palaces of Princes, who have been removed up and down, and thrown out of the way, like the lumber out of a new-furnish'd Church. The Works and Histories of the Lives of many of the old sound and loyal *Puritans*, written for the

Defensio Eccles. Anglicane contra Archiepisc. Spalatensem. cap. 33. p. 206.

most

most part by Conforming Divines commend them, and will commend them to all Godly Generations; and the Memories of the Orthodox *NON--CONFORMISTS* of the present Age, will be transmitted after them, to the better opinion of future Times, by a truer Tradition, than any History that is as yet come to the view of the World, by the reviling and aspersing Writers of this Age. And two ways After-Times will be truly informed concerning them; first, by that Angry Reproachful Art of Jest and Earnest (I do not mean those venomous halfpenny Volumes that will not hold the binding, and will be condemned to the fire by their very Authors, if ever they grow wise enough to repent) but in a greater bulk, and of greater gain to their Authors and Sellers, than profit to their Readers. Secondly, by the great numbers of Books written by the *Nonconformists*, to the real Advancement of Piety. By the first, serious and inquisitive Posterity will conclude that Tenderneſs, Piety, and Truth lodged not in their Bosoms, while their Hands mov'd their Pens, which aspersed their made-Adversaries in such a way, as could neither gain nor convince them. By the latter, they will conclude, when they observe the scope of their Tracts, soundness of their Matter, affectionate moving way of Writing in Practicals, and their Asserting the *Protestant* Doctrine, of former and latter Times, in their Controversials, that surely these Men were an excellent part of the Church, inspired by the Spirit of Grace and Truth, and deserved better usage, and a higher place, than a Barn or a Hall to preach in.

In speaking well of the *Nonconformists*, I have followed the Example of them that I reckon among the Chief of the Church of *England*: and if my Affection to them, and in them, to Christian and Protestant Name and Religion, hath prevailed upon me to an unusual Undertaking, if it be not pardonable with some, if it be acceptable to Jesus Christ, and suitable to the Minds of many good Men in the Church, and do some tolerable service to the suffering part, I doubt not but I shall be saved, without the Pardon of them that cannot pardon the Vertue of Moderation, any more than the aggravated offence of Nonconformity.

I have gone no further than to plead a trampled Cause, which they that hold it, think too good and precious to be trodden on by the proudest Foot, as fit to be taken into Consideration by the Wisdom and Authority of the Nation. I have not presumed to make Proposals, or Demands; that's left to wise and great Men. But if some of our Eminent * Church-Men have made Proposals of Abatement, and have not violated their Subscriptions, not to endeavour any alteration of the Government in Church or State; I hope I have

* Dr. Stilling. Preface to the *Unreasonab. of Separation.*

have not forfeited my Sonship, or broken Faith, by doing far less, and keeping within the Bounds of a well-meaning Man. And so much, and perhaps too much, by way of Apology.

I have opened in the Plea the Hardness of the Case, Greatness of the Sufferings, Worthiness of the Persons of the Non-Conformists, and the Loss to the Church by their Exclusion or Suppression. I might infer Conclusions from every of those Head of the Arguments, and drive the Plea more home; but now because their Sufferings are like to be more and greater, and they are to be a Carcass to the Eagles, I will take leave to discuss this seasonable and necessary Question.

Q. Whether it be not better, that the Penal Laws against the Non-Conformists, to which they are obnoxious, by their Preaching and Praying, and other Religious Exercises, should not be executed, but forbore rather than put in Execution, until such time, as our Gracious King and Parliament in time to come, shall maturely take the State of divided Protestants into their wise Consideration, and bring us all into a happier Legal Establishment, than we are in, or can be in, while our Divisions and their Causes continue? —

It may be thought high Presumption in a private Person, to determine which is the better; but I conceive, that because the Civil Magistrate is not Omniscient, but takes his Information from Inferiours, and private Men, coming to him through Publick Persons, it's rather a Duty than an Offence to propose such a Question, and discuss it, when too many determine perhaps without due Examination of the Case, that the rigorous Prosecution of Dissenters is best and needful.

In the handling of this Question, it will be necessary to state it, and shew;

1. Who I mean by the Non-Conformists.
2. State the Controversy between them, and the Church from which they dissent.
3. Open the nature of the Offences, for which they are liable to the Laws.
4. Explain what I mean by Forbearance of them, or the Execution of the Laws.
5. Why I limit the time, until our Gracious King shall take our divided State into further Consideration. After which done, I will,
6. Produce my Arguments for the Affirmative, That it is better the Laws should not be executed, than put in Execution. And,
7. Answer Objections to the contrary. —

1. By Nonconformists, I mean only such Ministers, Teachers, Pastors, and People, as are found in the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and

substantial Worship; that are *Protestants*, or reformed from the Corruptions of *Popery*, that peaceably submit to the Civil Government of the Kingdom, and the Temporal Laws thereof.

Secondly, The Controversy between the *Nonconformists* and the Church, or the *Conformists*, lies not in Matters Political and of Civil Government,

* *Vid. Dr. Stilling. Miscb. Separat. p. 21.* and their own many Books. *Cum illis quos tu Puritanos vocas, non est nobis de fide aut Fidei dogmate lis ulla: de Ritibus illis, & disciplina Ecclesiae nostrae contendunt, Craken-thorp Eccles. Anglic. Defensio. c. 33. p. 203.*

for they agree in that, according to the Laws and Constitution of the Realm. * Nor is the Controversy in the Fundamentals, or Articles of Faith, or between a Church-Government, and Anarchy or no Government; but about Matters of Form and Ecclesiastical Discipline, and Terms of Church-Communion, or of Exercise of their Publick Ministry, consisting in Subscriptions, Oaths, and Declarations, and some private Doctrines to be assented to.

But this is too general an Account; more particularly it is carefully to be noted,

1. That the Controversy between the *Nonconformists*, and the Church as now Established by Law; is not the same it was between the Church and *Nonconformists*, or *Puritans*, from the Reign of Q. *Elizabeth*, to our King's Reign. The *Nonconformists* in those days and following time, asserted a Government and Discipline of Divine Right by *Presbyterian* Classes, Synods and Lay-Elders, and dissented from the Government by *Diocesan* Bishops, and Ceremonies principally; yet these were against the *Brownists*, who separated from the Church of *England* as no true Church, which the meer *Nonconformists* did not. But since his Majesties wonderful Restauration,

See Mr. *Baxt. Preface to Bp Morley, and Bp Gunning, before his True and only way of Concord.*

that part of the Controversy which relates to Church-Discipline, and Government, is altogether new, and quite different from the old. No single Person, nor Combination of Men, did ever desire of the King or Parliament, the Establishment, or the Toleration of the *Presbyterian* Government or Discipline, either in the *Presbyterian* or *Independent* Way. And therefore the pains of those Writers, who have revived the Opinions, and raked into the Miscarriages of the *Presbyterians*, might have been spared, as not at all to the purpose; except to that which is unbecoming either peaceable or wise Men: They do only kindle Wrath by stirring Fire, and cry, Fire, Fire in the Church and State, when there is not so much as any Smoak ascending from the Embers of

Presbyte.

Presbyterian Principles. Those Tragical Stories of *Presbyterians*, whether true or not, which some Men bring to remembrance, seem to serve another Design, than the union or preservation of the Church, and apparently to render the *Nonconformists* suspicious and odious, and to hinder a Reconciliation.—

2. There are especially two sorts of Dissenters from the Legal Church ; First, Those who are called *Presbyterians*, but wrongfully so called, (and by me only for Distinction sake) the other are the *Congregational*, or *Independents*. The Fanaticks and Sectaries fall under this last Division in point of Government ; but the meer Congregational are Men of Learning, Reason, and sound Principles as to Faith, Worship, and Manners. And so there must be a Distinction between some, and others, that are commonly so called.—

All these agree in that they cannot conform to Subscriptions, Oaths, and Declarations ; and some in other Matters come nearer, or stand further off than others ; therefore the Difference cannot be more particularly stated, without an exact knowledg of their Tenets.

3. Those who are commonly called and reputed *Presbyterians*, declared themselves for his Majesties Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, as they have done against the Terms required by the Act of Uniformity. And now, if any Man would know the true State of the Difference between the *Conformists* and one part of the *Nonconformists*, may find it to lie in that Gracious Declaration, and that Act of Uniformity. The reputed *Presbyterian* cannot conform to the Act, but would have been glad if that Declaration had been made an Act. And they who would have gladly submitted to that rare Invention of Composure and Settlement, are no longer to be accounted *Presbyterians* in a strict and proper sense ; much less Enemies to the King and Subverters of the Government, that would

have conformed to what the King proposed, upon great Reasons and wise Counsels, as appears by the Reasons, Frame and Language of that Declaration : And they who condemn them that conform not to the Act, but would have conformed to his Majesties Declaration, if it had been turned into a Law, have declared at the same time their dislike of the King's Declaration. And if their Zeal be so hot against this kind of Dissenters, their Reverence of the King's Act, which gave them their Measures and Directions, both as to what they should ask and desire to

October 25th, 1660.
Petit. for Peace, p. 10.
To the King's Most
Excellent Majesty. The
due Account and humble
Petition of the Ministers,
of the Gospel commission-
ated for the review
and alteration of the
Liturgy. Lond. An.
1661. Mr. Baxter's
Preface Treat. of Episc-
opacy.

be ruled and governed by, should restrain them from being too rigid in their Censures. Had they drawn up such a Declaration as that is, and presented it to the King and Parliament, as the only Rule they would submit unto, and the King have rejected and refused it, then they had been more deservedly reprov'd for their Nonconformity. But when it was graciously declared by the King, and gratefully acknowledged by that

See the foresaid Petition.

At their Meeting in Sion Colledg.

Parliament, and the Divines that now dissent, did thankfully acknowledg and receive it, they cannot be condemned but with some Reflection upon that Declaration, and by consequence the King himself and his wise Counsellors, and that first Parliament who thanked the King for it. And let it

be further noted, that there was once a Parliament most freely chosen, of Loyal Members, that thanked the King for Terms of Accommodation and Union; and it is much for the Honour of the Dissenters, who humbly desired an Union upon those Terms, that they had once the King himself, and as many of his Wise Council as advis'd, and a Loyal Parliament freely chosen, of the same Judgment with them. If they are a Faction, they are such as never was before them; a Faction that would have been ruled by the King, and that good Parliament which did restore Him. I do not

** Or such Alterations as were made in the Liturgy, by his Majesty's Commission.*

notify the first rank of Dissenters from this, because they have submitted to this, and never offer'd any other Terms or Proposals by general Consent, but those declared by the King himself. * And those that are said to be for a new Model, are for the King's own Model.—

4. The other sort of Dissenters fall under the name of *Congregational* and *Independents*. As many of these as are under my present Consideration, are first Orthodox and sound in Faith, agreeing with the Scriptures, received Doctrine of this Church, in Articles and Homilies, and of other Reformed Churches, in opposition to Heresies and Popery.

2. They dissent not from the Civil Government of the Kingdom. Take their own professed Doctrine, 'It is the Duty of People to pray for Magistrates, to honour their Persons, to pay them Tribute and other Duties, to obey their lawful Commands, and to be subject to their Authority for Conscience sake. Infidelity or Difference in Religion doth not make void the Magistrates just and legal Authority, nor free the People from their Obedience to him; from which Ecclesiastical Persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any Power or Jurisdiction over them in their Dominions, or over any of their People, and

and least of all to deprive them of their Dominions or Lives, if he shall judge them to be Hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.*

3. They are for a Church-Government, by Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons, but within particular Congregations, having all Power within themselves, independent as to Jurisdiction, or Subordination to any other Church, or Synod, and they are for the Administration of all the Ordinances of Christ.

The most that ever these desired at any time, even when the Presbyterial Government was most likely to prevail, was a Permission or Toleration to exercise their Discipline, subjecting themselves, as any other Subjects, to the Magistrate, not desiring the Preferments of the Church, which they would have always go to them, that conformed to the Constitution of the Church according to Law, and with this they would now be thankfully contented.

* *A Declaration of the Faith and Order of the Congregation. Churches in England, in their Meeting at the Savoy Octob. 12, 1658. c. 24. Of the Civil Magistrate, §. 4. Vid. Dr. Owen's Truth and Innocency vindicated. Survey of Dr. Parker's Eccles. Polity p. 164, &c. Ibid. of the Instit. of Churches. §. 9*

The third thing to be spoken to, is the Nature of the Offence, for which they are liable to the Penalties of the Laws. The remote Offence or Transgression, is their Nonconformity to the Act of Uniformity, for which they have suffered a Deprivation of their Ecclesiastical Preferments. The next and immediate Transgression, is against other Statutes, which are these:

1. The Statute of the 35 of Queen Elizabeth, declared to be in force, 16 of Ch. II. c. 4.

2. The same Act against Conventicles and unlawful Assemblies, under Pretence of Exercise of Religion.

3. Act 17 Ch. II. c. 2. *Nonconformists* that take not the Oath, or Test therein set down, shall not inhabit in any Corporation, or live within five Miles of any Town that send Burgesses to Parliament; or five Miles of the Place where they were Ministers.

4. The Statutes of the 22th of Ch. II. c. 1. *Seditious Conventicles prevented and suppressed.*

By the first of these Statutes, viz. 35th of Q. Eliz. the Offences are two; the first is not coming to some Church or Chappel, or other place of Divine Service, to hear Divine Service established by her Laws, &c. The second is to speak or write, or to perswade any to deny or impugn Her Majesties Power in Causes Ecclesiastical, or perswade any against hearing Divine

Divine Service, or to be present at Conventicles, or unlawful Assemblies. The Penalty is, first Imprisonment until he acknowledge his Offence, and declare his Submission in some Church or Chappel; which if he refuse to do within three Months, he shall abjure the Realm if he do not, or if he shall return without her Majesties leave, he shall be proceeded against as a Felon.

I shall speak of the second under the fourth, because it was to expire after the next Session of Parliament, which was after three Years. And pass to the third Statute; The Offence by that Statute is, If any Person that had enjoyed any Parsonage, Vicarage, Lecture-stipend, and had not conformed to the Act of Uniformity, and shall not take and subscribe this Oath;

‘I A. B. do swear that it is not lawful on any pretence whatsoever, to take up Arms against the King; and that abhor that Traiterous Position, of taking Arms by his Authority against his Person, or against those that are commissioned by Him, in pursuance of such Commissions, and that I will not endeavour any Alteration of Government either in Church or State. If he shall preach in any Conventicle, or come within five Miles of any City, Corporation, or place of his Ministry, except on his Journey, or summoned by a *Subpœna*, he shall forfeit 40 l.

The Original Crime is Nonconforming; the next is not taking the Oxf. Oath, preaching in Conventicles, and coming within five Miles of any such place.—

The fourth Statute, *Car. 22. is, &c.* And the Crimes are; 1. ‘If any Man shall be present at any Assembly, &c. under colour of any Exercise of Religion, in any other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England*; at which there shall be five Persons or more assembled together, besides those of the same Household. 2. If any Man shall take upon him to preach or teach in any such Meeting, he shall forfeit 20 l. for the first Offence after Conviction, and 40 l. after the second Conviction of a second Offence. 3. If any Person shall willingly suffer such Meeting to be in his House, Out-house, Barn, Yard, or Backside, and be convicted, shall forfeit 20 l. &c. And every Hearer, 5 s.

The Faults that are most obvious, and most commonly prosecuted, are first, Preaching, Hearing, or entertaining of any Meeting under pretence of Religious Exercise, after another manner than the Liturgy or Practice of the Church of *England*, to five or more besides the Household where such Meeting is kept.

Fourthly, I am to explain what I mean by Forbearance.

1. I do not mean what never came into the Question, an Universal Toleration, or License of all Irreligion, Atheism, Heresy, or publishing pernicious

pernicious Errors, contrary to Godliness and Peace. 2. I do not mean by Forbearance, a Toleration or Forbearance of Prosecution against any that shall be found guilty of those Offences and Crimes, contained and declared in the Reasons of these Statutes, for the prevention whereof these Statutes were primarily intended, as the Intention of the Law.

1. I do not mean a Forbearance of any Person whatsoever, that shall by Printing, Writing, or express Words, purposely practise, or go about to prove or persuade any of His Majesties Subjects, or any other within His Realm, to deny, or withstand, or impugn His Majesties Power in Ecclesiastical Causes, or shall persuade any from coming to Church to Divine Service, or Communion to that end. There is no *Nonconformist* that hath written or printed, or (that ever I heard of) spoken, to impugn His Majesties Power *circa sacra*, but own it, as hereafter it will appear.

2. I do not mean a Forbearance of any Person or Persons, whether more or fewer than five, that shall, have, or do contrive any Insurrections, as Seditious Sectaries, or Disloyal Persons, or any dangerous Practices of Seditious Sectaries, or other Disloyal Persons, who under Pretence of tender Consciences, have or may at their Meetings contrive Insurrections; or that make but a pretence of Religious Exercises, to carry on any such Intentions. The above explained *Nonconformists* will heartily subscribe to this. Against these Contrivers the Law is bent, and not against such as are in earnest for Religious Exercises, but upon no seditious Design, tho it is otherwise interpreted contrary to the declared end of the Law.

3. The Persons to be forborn, are such Preachers, and Teachers, as never kept Conventicles, or Meetings, making those Religious Exercises a pretence only, when the Design was Rebellion, Sedition, or Insurrection; as never taught any such pernicious Doctrine to such a wicked end, but that have taught and hold the contrary, performing Religious Exercises for Religious ends; and both they that hear them, and they that entertain them, should be forborn.

4. By Forbearance, I mean a total Forbearance of all the Penalties, which they have incurred upon their Persons and their Estates. The merciful Indulgence of the Government, and many over ruling Providences concurring, have given them Advantages, and Boldness to meet more openly,

Nor did the N. C. desire but the Toleration of those that are tolerable, and the peaceable Liberties of all that agree on Catholick Terms of Primitive Simplicity in Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline. Petition for Peace, Anno. 1661.

See the Statute 35th Q. Elizabeth.

Vid. Statute of 16 Ch. II. c. 4.

openly and in greater Numbers, than they did before, than they could or would have done. If now there shall be a severe Prosecution against them, the Prisons will fill in many places, their Fines amount above their Estates; there will be neither Dish nor Spoon, Stool, nor Bed left for their Wives and Children, no, nor a Friend of their way left in the Land, in a Condition to relieve them. It is the ready way to fill many places in the Land with Tears and Cries, Beggary and Misery, such as no good Protestant can behold without a Sympathy. This is no better than to forbear a Creditor till the Interest grows to a great Sum, and then seize upon all he hath, enter upon his Land, and drive his Cattel, &c. this is Mercy, till Offences grow big for a huge Severity; Mercy patent, for latent Justice, to give them time to gather Flesh, and then to devour them. If the Rooks, the Informers, those Birds of Prey, hope to flesh themselves by picking the bones of the *Nonconformists*, it should go against the stomach of every true Gentleman, not to say Merciful Christian. If they must be suppress'd, give them notice of it; do not kill them in cold Blood, after Quarter given them. To make the Case familiar; There are a Company of honest, quiet People live about me, they were once in good Fashion and Reputation, but are now fallen in the World's danger, and are forced to be beholden to their Friends; they live in my Mannor, and have trespassed upon me, against the orders of it. I thought it hard to trouble them, or severely to gather my Amerciaments, for they were honest Men, and of my Religion too for the main, they were good Protestants in their way. I never heard of any Riots among them, or ill Designs that could be prov'd against any of them; when others were at their Pastimes, they were at their Prayers, and were laborious, while others that had more of the World, took more Pleasure; and they know that if I had been severe with them for every Trespass, they had not had a Cow or Cows keeping, not a Sheep or a Pig; and now they have well about them, and I am resolv'd, I will make them pay all the Amerciaments of my Court, for every Trespass; they shall have neither Cow, nor Sheep, nor House to sleep in in my Mannor, I'll make them pay, or ly in Prison, or fly the Land; for they are a dangerous ungrateful People: for when I stand for a Parliament-Man, or desire their Votes for my Friend, there is not a Man will appear for me; but they are all for them that are against a Popish Successor, and for uniting of Protestants, and such things as these: They are cross to me; what I abhor, they approve; when I address, they refuse to subscribe. Well, but Sir, I beseech you be merciful to them; and if you will have all your Town to be in all things of your Mind, give them notice first, or else it will be said you forbore them their lesser Fines, till they grew to a great Sum. I beseech you, do not so by them,

but

but be as merciful to them, as you are to other kind of Sinners.

Fifthly, The Limitation of the Question is, untill such time as our Gracious King and Parliament, in time to come, shall take the State of the divided *Protestants* into their Mature Consideration. We may rationally hope we shall have a Parliament from our King, who hath often declared his Resolution to have frequent Parliaments; we hope it will be a free Parliament; I do not mean free from force or violence upon Men's Persons, but violence upon their Reasons by Drunkenness, with its shameful Antecedents and Effects. And if ever we have such Elections, we shall pitch upon such Men, as long as there are any to be found, that are Men of Loyalty to the King and Government, of Estates and Quality, that are free from Temptation to get by dishonourable Arts, and that have too much to give away from themselves, and the Freeholders that choose them. A Protestant People will elect Protestant Representatives, and such as have a respect to Protestant Dissenters, in things that may be spared without hurt to Religion, or infringement of Government; much less a change, and that as they are Natives, Relatives, peaceable, and pious good Men. It cannot be thought, that they that would exclude *Papery*, will leave a Breach among our selves for it to enter in at; our last Parliaments have declared their Inclinations by their Votes, and from what they have done, we may guess at what they will do, if God give them time. And there must be a depth in Policy deeper than Men of a short Line can fathom, or a great mistake, that those Gentlemen and Magistrates that are bent to suppress our Conventicles, should act with such a Spirit now, when they have declared who, and what they are for. Is this the way to gain the Body of the Nation to choose them, or those they affect, into a next Parliament, when it is visible what Interest they serve, by disobliging the Protestant *Nonconformists*, and giving notice to the Church, and Conforming *Protestants*, that they cannot be safe from them, that suppress, if not cut off, as many as they can of the same Faith and Worship for substance, for those Differences, that need not be, if Condescension and Love might but come in Fashion?

The Controversy between the Church and them is not yet determined, but there is this good of late got by the Heat of Writing; that both sides have declared their Minds more freely than heretofore; and there are Proposals made by both sides, which if they cannot be universally admitted, yet from the rude Draughts of a Building, wise Men may agree upon the Frame, by adding, taking away, and composing.

*The Rev. Dr. Stilling.
Preface to Unreasonableness of Separation.
Mr. Baxter, Humphrey,
Lobb, &c.*

the Parliament made the Laws out of Love to the Church, and they will not do; Magistrates out of Love to the Church, should abstain from Prosecutions for a time, and be patient for a while, except they saw, what no Man can see, that lives nearer to them than their Informers, any more cause of Suppression by any contrived dangers, either to Church or State, than when they are fast asleep in their Beds. If you have just cause to fear their Principles, disarm them of their *Knives*; but those that know them better than their Enemies, or your Informers; do think no more Danger like to arise from their Principles, than there was against the King and most favourable Parliament, from their Preparations, for Rebellion. Are all the Nonconforming Preachers of a sudden turned Jesuits? is their Faith turned into Faction? have they submitted their Scriptures and their Senses to an Infallible Guide? acknowledged in him the power of both Swords, and listed themselves under his consecrated Banners? Are all their Children Males? Are all their Infants in a few Months grown up to be above sixteen Years of Age, fit for Arms? Are their Wives and Daughters become *Amazons*? How many thousands can they make? Where are their Rendezvous, their Musters, their Lists, their Magazines? Where are their Generals? Who are their Correspondents, and Confederates abroad? The distressed persecuted *Protestants of France*! Are they fortifying their Barns and Meeting-Places? or ready to march and take the Field? Why are we not all in Arms for fear of them, if the Danger be so great from their Assemblies! Abstain from these Men for a little time; and let not their Flight be in Winter, or on the Sabbath-Days. If you will not forbear till such a time, one thing I hope and look for; that when you drive their Cattel, or offer their Goods to sale, you will find no Buyers; or if you send them to the Goals, their Keepers and Fellow Prisoners may become true Converts, and that you that send them thither may fetch them out.

But I must not forget my Arguments to prove the Affirmative of the Question, That it is better the Execution of the Laws should be forbore against *Protestant* Dissenters, than urged or countenanced.

I have laid the Question in a Comparative, and affirm it is better, &c. The Comparative doth suppose a Positive; if I can prove that it is not good to execute the Penal Laws upon Dissenting *Protestants*, then it will follow *a fortiori & majore*, that it is better they should be spared, than punished.

The Argument runs thus.

It is not good to execute the Laws upon Dissenting *Protestants*, therefore it is better to forbear their Execution, than put them in Execution.

The

The Proposition is to be proved by an Enumeration of the Laws, that Men are pressing upon them.

1. It is not good to execute the Statute of 35th of Q. Elizabeth. which they who are in danger are threatened with. That which the whole Parliament thought dangerous to the whole Protestant Interest in England, and did, as far as in them lay, disanul (a Bill being prepared to be signed by His Majesty) should not be thought good or fit to be executed upon one part of *Protestants*, by some particular Justices of the Peace, on the irreligious, covetous Information of a sorry sort of Men. The loss of that Bill was judged so great a loss to the Nation of *Protestants*, that the next Parliament made diligent Inquiry into the Causes of that dangerous Frustration, of what was thought as much for the Preservation of *Protestants* from Banishment by Abjuration, as for the Preservation of our Bodies from burning by the Act *de Heretico comburendo*. But if this Argument be not of force against them, that can handle a Sword better, or sign a Warrant, than answer an Argument, or that will not be reasoned out of a Resolution; it may receive some further Strength by this further Enumeration.

1. The impartial Execution of that Statute, will be ill for all the *Papists* in the Land, that, owning the Supremacy of the Pope, do impugn the King's in Causes Ecclesiastical, and have absented from Common-Prayer. They must abjure the Realm: and truly a little respect to *Nonconformists*, because they are not *Papists*, but *Protestants*, should direct our Magistrates to begin with the *Papists*, and try, if by ridding the Land of *Papists*, the Stiffness of the Dissenters may not bend towards Conformity. But to begin with *Protestants*, and leave the Enemies of the King and Church to stay behind them, that have potent Confederates, is not safe, nor kind, and respective to *Protestants*.

2. It will be ill for thousands of them that go under the Name of *Protestants* of the Church of England, that may be proved not to have been at Common-Prayer in any Church or Chappel, or place where Common-Prayer is wont to be made. To prosecute *Protestants* that preach, or are present at Religious Duties, tho not after the manner of the Liturgy, and to spare them that are oftener present at a Coffee-House or Tavern, than at any Worship of God, is too partial a Proceeding, and argues little kindness to Religion, by shewing more to them that wear a Name of Religion, and not so much as a Cloak of Religion besides.

3. It is not for the King's Honour, Profit, or Safety, and therefore it is not good, that a general Riddance should be made of all Dissenters, both *Papist* and *Protestant*, out of the Land by Abjuration, when the *Papists* have many Friends that can furnish them with Arms, to make their way back

again, with some Armies and Auxiliary Forces to help them to pull down the Church of England, and set up what King they please.

4. It cannot be good for the Church of England, I mean the severe and rigorous tempered Men, who will multiply Enemies against them, when they see that Severities are used upon good Subjects; and the moderate and sensible part of the Church will be grieved, to see their Brethren in the Faith drawn out first for Sacrifice.

5. It cannot be good for those Gentlemen, who have expressed their dislike of our last Parliaments, and that hope for another, and labour to be in it themselves, when the whole Nation see and know how friendly they are to the *Popish* Party, how hard to believe as much a *Popish Plot*; and have, as soon as possibly they can, after their Thanks to the King for his Ruling by Laws, declared what Laws they are ready to execute. Can they think that any besides a terrified servile *Dependent* Part of the Nation, will vote for them, or for their Friends Interest? That therefore which is good for none, ought not by any to be executed, and none will, but such as are resolved against all Reason and the highest Wisdom. —

The other two Laws are directly against *Protestant* Dissenters.

Secondly, It is not good to execute the five Mile Act upon them.

1. It is not a righteous thing to execute that Law upon them, *except* they are guilty of that Crime, for which that Law doth principally and 'mainly provide. The Crimes recited in that Act, are, 'Whereas they 'conformed not, &c. nor made the Declaration in the Act of Uniformity 'but settled themselves in Corporations, taking occasion thereby to instil the 'Principles of Schism and Rebellion into the Hearts of His Majesties 'Subjects, to the great danger of the Church and Kingdom. This is the pretended Mischief, against which that Act was made; and if so, then it cannot with any Justice be executed, but upon such as have sowed those Principles; If such have been, no Favour is asked for them. But who comes out to prove, that any *Nonconformist* Preacher hath instilled such Principles? If some have, why should those that have not, suffer as if they had? if some have, find them out; if all have, spare none; if none have, why should any suffer? If they have, those Principles are very weak and ineffectual, have had many Years to work in, and yet for the honour of the Religion, which they profess, no Rebellion hath been as much as moved. Was their *Nonconformity* a Crime? they patiently bore the sentence of the Law? Their living in Corporations could be no Crime; their preaching Orthodox Doctrine could do no hurt to Church nor States; their not taking that Oath, was no greater a Crime in them, than in all the Lords and Commons, who then, and since have argued against it, and opposed it. To instil the Principles of Schism and
Rebellion

Rebellion must be the Crime : Now if none of them have been guilty of that Infillation, it is not good, because not just, to execute the Laws upon them.

2. It is not good to execute that Law upon Dissenting *Protestants*, which at first making, was promoted by Men Popishly inclined, and since appeared to be *Papists*, and was never executed but in Favour of *Papery*, and was opposed by Loyall *Protestants*. I know not in what rank of *Protestants* to place him, with whom this Argument is weak, except among those good natured *Protestants*, that have served the *Popish* Designs. Who were the Promoters of it, but Sir *Tho. Clifford*, (since Lord Treasurer, and a professed *Papist*) Sir *Solomon Swale*, and Sir *Roger* (or *Tho.*) *Strickland*, that since appeared to be *Papists*? Who more opposed it than the wise and Loyal Earl of *Southampton*, Lord Treasurer, Earl of *Shaftsbury*, who scented the *Popish* Plot, and pursued it before many were aware; the Lord *Wharton*, and others, firm to the *Protestant* Interest? Take the good Sence of an Honourable Member of the Parliament at *Westminster*, in the Debate of the Bill for uniting *Protestants*. 'But suppose we should follow this Advice, and make new Laws, and require a severe Execution of the old; how can you imagine that as long as the *Popish* Interest is so prevalent, the Execution of such Laws shall be continued longer, than may be subservient to the Interest of that Party? Have we not had a sad Experience of this? Hath the *Oxford* Act, or that of 35th of Queen *Elizabeth*, or any other against Dissenters, been executed in favour of the Church? (note this, all that think it a Service to the Church) Are not the *Dissenters* as many, if not more now than ever? — And is there any thing more visible than these Laws have been made use of to serve the *Popish* Interest, or, as Engines rather for the Affairs of the State, than the Church. — It the *Oxford* Act, and other Acts against *Dissenters*, were projected in favour of the *Protestant* Religion; it was strange they were so much promoted (as many Members now here, who did serve in those Parliaments, do remember) by Sir *Tho. Clifford*, Sir *Solomon Swale*, and Sir *Roger Strickland*, who have since appeared to be *Papists*. — Sir, I am afraid the name of the Church hath been strangely made use of to bring in *Papery*, &c. upon which, resolved that the said Bill be committed upon the Debate of the House for uniting *Protestants*.

The last Act to be executed, is that of 22 Ch. II. c. 1. *Seditious Conventicles prevented and suppressed*. The Persons against whom it is levelled, are described to be Seditious Sectaries, Disloyal Persons, who (Hypocrites) under pretence of tender Consciences, have or may contrive Insurrections.

Insurrections. Concerning this Act, let us observe the Time when it was enacted; it was *Anno 1670*. Since which time, we may not pass over, without loss to the Argument, how the Thoughts of our Governours and Law-makers have turned to another point, and that very Parliament, which was observed for a very great part of it to be young Gentlemen, growing older, grew more cool and moderate towards differing *Protestants*, more suspicious of *Popery*; and the more resolute they grew, in maintaining Property and the Protestant Religion, and to break the Arms and the Legs of growing *Popery*, the more temperate they grew towards the *Non-conformists*, not to take any Strength from His Majesties Declaration of *March 15, 1671*, because it seemed to tend to the Propagation of *Popery*, and was recalled upon the Parliaments Representation, altho some wise Protestant States-Men, thought that Declaration would be a kindness to *Dissenters*, and no greater Injury to the Church and Protestant Religion from *Popery*, than they received by *Popery*, growing apace under the Bignity of a Connivance and Favour of great Men. Not to take hold of this, to shew that the King thought fit to mitigate the rigor of that Law, the very next Year after it was enacted. That which gives Strength to my Argument is this, that at the next meeting of the Parliament, which began *February 24, 1672*, an Act passed against the *Papists*, and a Bill was presented by the House of Commons to the Lords, in favour of Dissenting, and for uniting *Protestants*, which (as some that have as much reason to know as any who write) would have passed, if they had had time to sit; and from that time, that long Parliament, who had made the Act against Conventicles, how resolute soever they were against an Indulgence, *February 15, 1662*; they saw the incompatibility between Execution of their own Law, and the Preservation of the Protestant Religion, and saw a necessity of uniting *Protestants*; at the same time, when they saw our increasing Dangers from the Increase of *Popery*. And our several Parliaments since, have reasoned upon the same Principles and Foundations once again, so far as to commit a Bill to unite all *Protestants*. And now I have prepar'd my self for this Argument; It is not well done, and cannot be good for the Church or Kingdom (and if not good to them, it should not be thought good by *Protestants*) which that very Parliament that made the Act, and many other Parliaments, thought not good for the Church and Kingdom. For some particular Magistrates, upon the Information of some self-seeking Informers, to execute the Laws against the sense of the *Legislators*, who should (and certainly did) best know, what was for our good, is to oppose a private Opinion to a publick Deliberation, and a private Spirit against a publick. That I may draw these Reasonings to a Conclusion; it is not a due Execution of the Laws,

except

except it be upon the Persons, and to the ends intended in the Laws. But if you would execute the Laws upon the proper Objects, you must execute them upon *Seditious Sectaries, disloyal Persons, very Hypocrites, that do under pretence of Religious Exercises, instil Principles of Schism and Rebellion into the Minds of the King's Subjects.* The Law goes upon such a Supposition, and to prevent such Mischiefs; but if there be no such Meetings, to such a Tendency, there are no Persons that deserve such Executions: If there be, let them be tried; if there be not, of all times, is there no time but this, for Protestant Magistrates to go upon the Information of Informers, to give Countenance to a Scandal, that *Protestant Dissenters, are as pernicious to the Government, as confederated Papists?* And that *Protestants* should act contrary to their Principles, contrary to their Interests, to bring certain Ruine upon Themselves, Families, and Friends, without any the least hope of Relief, or mending their Condition! A Game indeed! to set Informers to find a Hare, when they should run down the Fox.

If this be not to sin against Love to *Protestants*, because of some Omissions, or against Knowledg, it is sin against Sence, and many Years Experience. If you do really believe, and can prove by full and honest Evidence, that such Men have preached such Doctrines, take them as Traytors, and never proceed against them as Dissenters, for preaching in a manner different from the Liturgy.

These Arguments proceed from consideration of the Laws, and are but my first Head of Arguments.

The second sort of Arguments is drawn from the Fact, for which the Dissenters are to suffer.

The Crime, *primâ facie*, is preaching in a manner different from the Church of *England*, and not according to the Liturgy, to numbers above Four, besides the Household. This is the Fact. The Proof of it, is either by Confession of the Parties, which we will not suppose, or the Notoriousness of the Fact, which needs further proof; it all depends upon the Oaths of two Witnesses. What do they depose? They (who perhaps know not what an Oath is, nor what a Sin Perjury is) depose, that *A. B.* preached at such a time or times, in such a place or places, to such numbers, against the Statute. But what if the Preacher preach'd true Doctrine? exhorted to Peace and Holiness, Obedience, Justice, Mercy; and not one word tending to Schism or Rebellion? What if the Person be a loyal Subject? These things are out of the Question, out of the Deposition. But if these Witnesses cannot depose, that such a Preacher is a Disloyal Person, his Preaching to be to instil Schism or Rebellion, or

to move to Insurrection; then if the Execution be according to the Deposition, it is Execution upon Persons not intended by the Law, and for preaching not forbidden by the Law; for the Law forbids not Preaching, but to such an end. There is one Catching Circumstance, it was above the Legal Number: But yet one would think that that should not be a Crime, except Rebellion and Insurrection be the intention of the Person, and the effect of the Thing. For many, for five hundred to hear a good Sermon, in a peaceable manner, is in it self no Crime; the Number, and the Preaching, must be to an ill Design, in the intention of the Law: For it were impious to forbid Preaching in it self. The Evil of it must be in the evil of the Matter, and evil of the Design; and by Consequence, only such Preaching, and such Numbers, are liable to the Penalty, that is, of a destructive or offensive Design; unless you punish for Preaching, which is good, separate from the Design, as evil. This premised, my Argument is this;

It is not good but evil, to punish well doing, as if it were evil doing; and to punish Preachers and Hearers, that never preached nor heard Rebellion or Sedition, as if they were the highest Criminals in a Kingdom.

But to issue out Warrants, and execute them upon Persons, when nothing is proved against them, but what is good and not prohibited by the Law, as evil in it self, but as evil to an evil end, *viz.* Preaching is not good, therefore it is not good to punish them, &c.

To punish a Fact, that in the intention of the Persons, or nature of the Thing, hath no tendency to Mischief, to be prevented by the Law, is not good but evil; because the Execution is not directed to the end of the Law, and by Consequence it is no legal Execution.

But to execute the Law for preaching, and hearing, upon Preachers and Hearers, whose preaching and hearing hath no evil tendency to Sedition, Rebellion, Insurrection, or Schism, is such an Execution. Therefore it is not good, but evil.

The Minor is proved from the Peaceableness of the *Nonconformists*, Piety of their Principles, from the many Years Experience and Effects; and seditious, or rebellious, or schismatical matter, are not the things sworn against them, or can be sworn, but preaching to such Numbers, and hearing in such Numbers, and in a manner different from the Church of *England*, which may be, and yet not ill, and may not be so for all the *Informers* know.

Obj. But the Law forbids such Men to preach, as conform not, swear not, and in such a manner, and to such numbers of Persons: If the Law be good, it is good to execute them.—

Ans.

Ans. The Law forbids such Men, as are *seducing Sectaries, disloyal Persons, to such an end, as was often named.* And such Persons, and such Religious Acts, abused to a wicked end and purpose, and none else. If the Persons are not such, nor the Religious Exercises so abused to such wicked purposes, then you must hold that either the Laws can, or do forbid those Men that are good, to do that which is good, and so forbid absolutely that which is good; which is to scandalize the Law, and them that made it; or you must yield the Execution to be ill, and illegal, except those Persons, and Actions be taken relatively to those unlawful Designs, which if proved, they are Criminals of another nature; and if it cannot be proved, they ought not so to suffer, as if they were what they are not.

My third Argument is taken from the Consideration of the Persons, and of the Facts. 1. They are *Protestants*, if you believe me not, try them. 2. They meet for Religious Exercises, and holy Ordinances; not for Sedition or Rebellion, or to move any Insurrections; if the contrary can be proved, I'll grieve and pray, but never plead for them. But both the one and the other is evident; that which is sworn against them is neither Sedition, &c. but Preaching, as was said before. Hence I form my Argument.

It is not good, but evil, to use Dissenting *Protestants* worse than ever *Papists* have been used.

But to execute those Laws upon Dissenting *Protestants* neither for Rebellion, nor moving Insurrections, is to use them worse than ever *Papists* have been used. Therefore it is not good to execute the Laws upon them.

It is to be more rigorous towards our Brethren, and such as agree in one and the same King, same Laws, same Worship as to the substance of Christ's Ordinances, and are willing to unite, than you are towards Men that own another Supremacy, King, and Bishops, are idolatrous in their Worship, and are for rooting us out, and not taking us in, without hazard of the Truth of Christ, and Hypocrisy, and Eternal Life.

To punish *Dissenters* for preaching, and other Exercises of Religion, because to such Numbers, and not in such an uniform manner, is to punish them for Religion. If Religion be the Cloak, and Rebellion or Sedition be the Mischiefs to be concealed and conveyed under it, then Religion is but a pretence, and that cannot excuse them from suffering, which doth highly aggravate the Sin. But if neither be inferred from their Principles, nor infused into their Exercises, then there is no danger to the King, in his Life, Prerogative, nor Authority. If neither hath been found in any of them, it is not justly imputable to them; and then, if their Preaching and Prayer be the Fact, for which they suffer, they suffer for that

which no *Papist* ever suffered for alone. For the clearing of this, and proving of it, I will distinguish Punishments, into Capital, and Pecuniary or Real. No *Papist*, whether Priest or Lay-man, ever suffered Death in *England* for Religion, but for Treason; and their fore-acted Conspiracies and Treasons, constrained Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James*, to make

Vid. Torturam Torti. per. Ep. Cicestriensem.

Ep Andrews, p. 145, 146, 147.

The Execution of Justice in England, not for Religion, but for Treason.

* Reprinted at London, 1675.

Laws for their own preservation. This is proved by King *James*, and all our Protestant Writers against the *Papists*; I need not quote particulars: This is particularly proved in a peculiar Treatise, penned by the direction of the Lord Treasurer *Burleigh*; as the learned Publisher of the Collection of several Treatises, tells us in his Epistle, concerning the Reasons and Occasions of the * Penal Laws. And what is there proved, is acknowledged by the Secular Priests 1601, in their *Important-Considerations*. But if our *Nonconformists* should be prosecuted upon the 35th of *Eliz.* if they will not con-

form upon their three months Imprisonment; they must abjure the Realm; and if they go not away, or return without the King's Leave, it is Felony, and that is Capital. And if it be for Nonconformity, it goes under the name of *Conscience*, and for *Religion*, without any guilt, or proof of Sedition or Treason; and so they will suffer for Religion, and for no other but the *Protestant Religion*, what *Papists* never did but for Treason. And the Queen past over many justifiable occasions, of an earlier severity: The Supremacy of the Pope was a tender point of jealousy, and a trial of the Queen's Patience; but she was not kindled by it, but suffered many that were in that point for the Pope, and against Her, to enjoy their Estates, and Honourable Liberty, with Men of as great Quality as themselves, or in their own Houses. Dr. *Heath*, Arch-Bishop of *York*, and Chancellor to Queen *Mary*, enjoyed his Estate, and Liberty in his own House till his Death. Dr. *Poole* Bishop of *Canterbury*, Dr. *Tunstal* of *Duresm*, Dr. *White* of *Winchester*, Dr. *Oglethorp* of *Carlisle*, Dr. *Thirlby* of *Ely*, Dr. *Watson* of *Lincoln*, were not pressed with any Capital Pain, tho they maintained the Pope's Authority against the Laws of the Realm: and some

Important-Considerations, p. 54.

Abbots, &c. as you may see it in the aforesaid Collection, 111 *Treat.* p. 10, 11. and acknowledged by the Secular Priests—

while her Majesty and the State dealt with the *Catholicks*, as you have heard (which was full eleven years, no one *Catholick* being called in question of his Life, for his Conscience all that time.) Consider how some of our Profession proceeded with them. Her Highness had scarcely felt the Crown warm

‘warm upon her Head, but it was challenged from her by some of her Neighbours, as Mr. *Saunders* noteth, &c. p. 55.

Let us pass from Capital to Pecuniary Mulcts, and compare them. Of all the Laws against Popish Recusants, none seems more to punish them for Religion, than their not coming to Church, and their saying or being present at Mass; and the Fines imposed for those Acts of theirs, The Forfeiture upon him that saith Mass, is 200 Marks, and a Years Imprisonment; upon him that willingly

Anno. 23^d Eliz. c. 1.

heareth Mass 100 Marks, and Imprisonment for a Year; for not repairing to Common-Prayer, 20 *l.* every Month, and forbearing to come within twelve Months, shall be bound in a Bond of 200 *l.* to the good Behaviour. But besides the Idolatry of the Mass, these Laws do not proceed against the Mass, as an idolatrous Worship, * and as it is Religion; but as there is Treason against the Government in that Worship. For the Mass is celebrated by a Priest, and a Priest receives his Ordination from the Church of Rome, and is a Subject to the Pope’s Supremacy, acknowledges his Jurisdiction, and denies the King’s in Ecclesiastical Affairs. There never was any Treason without a Priest in it, nor Mass with out a Priest, says Bp *Calton*. The very Form of Submission enjoined to all them that conform to our Laws, and come to Common-Prayer, doth evidence this Truth. ‘And to acknowledg and ‘testify in my Conscience, that the Bishop or See of ‘Rome hath not, nor ought to have any Power or ‘Authority over Her Majesty, or within any of Her ‘Majesties Realms and Dominions, &c.

* *Nemini potest esse obscurum, Leges que feruntur, multas que dicuntur hic apud nos in Recusantes, feri & dici non Religionis causa meræ, sed mixtæ; mixtæ cum malâ Mente & Fide in Principem; nec nisi in Recusantes Bullator. Tor. Tor. p. 132, 133.*

* 35th Eliz. c. 2.

But our *Nonconformists*, will willingly renounce the Papal Jurisdiction, and own the King’s Supremacy, and refuse not the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, which the *Puritans* of former times refused not, but took. Mr. *Baxter* professeth in the name of the *Nonconformists*; The Article of ‘Religion for the Power of Kings and Obedience ‘of Subjects: we need not transcribe, but do consent to it, so we do to the Canons, which require ‘the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and answerable Obedience to all the Homilies against Rebellion, and for Obedience, and all that ever we found to be for this, the publick Doctrine of the ‘Church. Mr. *Baxt.* 2^d *Plea for the N. C.* p. 86. f. 10.

Vid. Bp Andr. Tortur. Tort. p. 110. & 379. — Profitentur, subscribunt, jurant indies.

Their Worship is pure, but in the sence of Laws defective, as not being with, or according to the Liturgy. And what manner of *Protestants* they are, let their publick Confessions, their private Writings, and their Morning-Exercises against Popery testify. Which of all the 1800 or 2000 Ministers cast out *Barthol.* 1662, was ever found, or suspected to be, in any Conspiracy against the King or Government, how ill soever they have bin used? There are a reviling sort of Rake-hell Scriblers, that they may find but a Brand, or a Coal to smutch any of them with, that transgress the Act of *Oblivion*, which the Royal Party did need, as well as the other side, for all they did without lawful Commissions. But since the days of the Flood of Confusions and Miseries, which of them all is guilty? I write this for the honour of our Common Profession, and for the Glory of God therein. And yet, bring them to account upon the Five Mile Act, and how many Forty Pounds? and upon the Act against Conventicles, then Twenty pounds for every Sermon by the Preacher, and Twenty pounds the Master of the House for every Sermon the first time, and Forty pounds the second, and afterwards for every such Offence Forty pounds, &c. How highly will two Sermons a day amount! and five shillings a time to every Hearer! &c. And it is enacted that the Law be construed most largely and beneficially for the suppression of them. Our Justices have need of Mercy! and for encouragement to the unskilful Justice, no advantage shall be taken for any default in any Form, or Proceedings. The Law by this security and indemnity hath been very merciful to many Justices, not trained up in the Formalities of the Law; by way of recompence, let them be the more merciful to the many honest Offenders, that worship God in Christ with their best Judgment, or upon involuntary Mistakes.

My last positive Argument shall be this, and I appeal to any Man of discerning, whether upon the first hearing of it, he be not taken with it, if not overcome.

It is not good (no Man can say it is good) to execute the Laws with a like heavy hand upon all, and every Offender, without making a difference between one Man and another, between one Offence and another.

There may be a considerable difference between one Preacher and another, one Hearer and another, one place, and one time and another. But the Penalty sweeps all before it.

Obj. The Law makes them all alike, therefore the Executioner must act by the Law, the Ballance is out of, and not in his hand.

Ans. True; but how? still upon supposition of the evil Intention, or what was the cause or Reason of the Law, and then I confess, the Punish-

Punishment is but moderate, upon the least and weakest Insufer of Rebellion, or mover of Insurrection.

Justice is impartial, but never so impartial, as not to examine Circumstances, which make an alteration, or difference between Things and Persons. Crimes have their Mitigations as well as Aggravations; and Judges will weigh them before they proceed to Sentence, and temper Judgment with Mercy; it moves a compassionate just Judg to pronounce a deserved Sentence. The Justices are to require the Execution of these Penal Laws, but with no distinction, and no more Mercy, than the hungry Informer, who perhaps hath wasted his small Fortune in a sinful way, and acts upon no better Principle than Covetousness, and Anger against Religion, which he never loved so well, as to practise, nor ever learned so far as the Church-Catechism.

Must a Loyal, Learned, Laborious Preacher, that preacheth the greatest Truths of the Gospel, and preacheth Holiness and Peace with the greatest Fervour, that never taught any Defection, but from the Prince of Darkness, and the Law in the Members; that perswades Men to be reconciled to God, to take Christ's Yoke, to learn of him; which whosoever doth, deserveth the esteem of the best of Men? Must such a Preacher pay so dearly for spending his Days, and Strength, and Pains, to do good to Souls, to mend an evil World? and no Consideration had either to his Merits, Soundness of Judgment, Holiness of Life, Peaceableness of Behaviour; but he must suffer as if he was a dangerous Novice, a Corrupter of Manners, and a Sower of Tares? No respect to his Gray-Hairs, the chargeableness of a diseased Body; to the many chargeable Removes he hath made, to the Dependence of a Family, for Subsistence, &c! No Commiseration to the poor and needy! Is there no allowance for a Man to preach, where multitudes of Souls do perish for want of Knowledge? and others hunger for the Word, and have none to guide them, but perhaps one that cannot guide himself! What if a man spends his Pains in a place where there are many Parishes, that consist of many Hamlets, and all cannot, that would, come to Church, especially in Winter-time? What if a good Man preach in a Parish, where are many that cannot hear in one Place? What if a Man take Pains in a place, where to many Churches there is not maintenance for one Minister, to live like a studious and a sober Man, such as no Man will accept, but the young and unexperienced, in hopes of a better in time? yet shall there be no regard had to these, or many more Circumstances that make the Labours of good Men necessary and profitable? But it is hard when that which deserveth Thanks and Encouragement, shall be rewarded with ruine to a Mans Estate, to a Mans Health and Life, and be baited by Reproaches, as he goes to the Justice,

or as he is sent to his Prison! so was good Mr. *Joseph Allen* used.

I have staid a great while upon the Positive before I am come to one step of the Comparative. But if I have laid that ground-work well, my Comparative will rise apace, and stand firm.

For my clearer Procedure, I will lay the Comparative between two.

1. Compare the Good you aim at by the Execution of the Laws, with the Good of forbearance of that Execution.

2. The supposed Evil of the forbearance, with the real Evil of the Execution.

First, The Good you aim at, by the Execution of the Laws, may I think, be reduced to these Heads expressed in the Acts of Parliament; for you cannot aim at any Good by the Execution, but that which was aimed at by the Laws which you execute. I will name them particularly, First, for the preventing and avoiding of such Inconveniencies and Perils, as might happen and grow by the wicked and dangerous Practises of seditious Sectaries and Disloyal Persons, by settling in Corporations, thereby taking occasion to distill the poisonous Principles of Schism and

Act XVII Ch. II.
Nonconformists restrained from inhabiting Corporations. An. Car. II. 22. c. 1.

Rebellion, to the danger of the Church and Kingdom. For providing speedy Remedies against growing and dangerous Practises of Seditious Sectaries, &c. contrive Insurrections (as was said before) These are the Benefits you aim at, if you aim according to the Law. Compare the Histories of the times with the Laws, and you will find that the *Nonconformist* Divines, who pleaded for the Discipline, were not so branded, such as

Mr. Cartwright, and others of his way. But (besides the *Papists*, which that Law strikes at also) before that Law was made, *Hacket*, *Arbington*, and

Vid. Cambden. Annales Eliz. Anno 1591.

Copinger, had shewed themselves; and what were they but brainfick, mad, ranting *Phanaticks*, and Blasphemers? And after the Law was made, who were taken and punished (as *Mr. Cambden* observes) but *Barrow* and *Perry*? and what did they

suffer for, but for Seditious Books? ‘*Barrow* and his ‘*Sectaries* did *show monstrous Opinions*, condemned

Annales. An. 1593. ‘the Church, did derogate from the Queen’s Authority in Ecclesiastical

Thankful Remembrance of God’s Mercies. c. 13.

‘*Matters.* And what dangers the Queen and State were in, from the *Papists* at that time, may be seen both in *Mr. Cambden* and the Reverend *Bp Carleton*, both from publick Enemies, & secret Conspiracies,

Dr.

Dr. Lopez, (the Sir George Wakeman of those days) being then Physician to the Queen's Family) was to poison the Queen. Protestant Princes should beware of Jewish and Popish Physicians. But Lopez ended his days at Tyburn.

What Poison our Nonconformists did infuse into Corporations, or what Insurrections they moved; I do not hear, nor read of any Insurrection, but in the North, by some of the discontented Army, when frustrated of their Hopes, and of Venner and that desperate Company. Another Plot I have some where read of, of Green, and other Phanticks, blown up and incensed by the Jesuites, to take away the King, and burn the City; when those deluded Men were engaged, the Jesuits gave them the slip, and left them the Halter, April, 1666. But which of all the Nonconformist Preachers was in any of those Designs?

*The Story touched
by Sir H. C. in his
Speech, October 26th,
1680.*

There is a difference between the time of making and of executing the Laws, suppose that there was apparent danger (suppose it, which is more than I or others know) then from Nonconformists; yet if now we have the Experience of almost twenty Years, of their Loyalty and Peaceableness, why should the Laws made against them that may be Transgressors, be executed upon them that are not Transgressors? The Law is to prevent a Fact, but the Execution follows it. The Law may proceed upon Supposition, and suspect such a thing may be; but the Execution goes upon proof, that such a thing there was. If such an Evil cannot be proved, why should the Penalties be imposed?

Now they who are urgent for the Execution, must hold This, that it is better for the King, his Kingdoms, and the Church, to punish the Nonconformists according to Law, than to spare them. How vain and unreasonable a Proposition and Judgment is this, when we do plainly see the King, and Kingdom, and Church are safe from any Conspiracies, or ill Designs, or poisonous Infusions from any of them: Certainly if any City or Corporation be in danger, it is London; but, to God's Glory be it acknowledged, none of their Preachers have proved seditious. What a convincing Proof did London give of their Loyalty and Valour, in that furious and astonishing Insurrection of Venner in the City? Were not the Dissenters then in Arms? and were not their Numbers great? How easy had it been for them to attempt, at least, any ill Design? but as their Loyalty took up Arms; so their Loyalty laid them down. And, let some say what they can, are there any Men more severe than Dissenters, in point of Ceremony, against Heretical Blasphemers, and unruly Sects? not only as differing from their Models and particular Humours, but as contrary to the Fundamental Principles of Religion and Government? The severity

of New-England and other Places, are Proofs beyond denial of this Observation. There is not a wise Man, but must maintain Government, and submit to that he lives under, as far as he can without Sin; and Distraction is an unfit means to a Reformation. Except a Man could certainly foretel who shall conquer, it is madness in any Man or Men, to move a War, and by Sedition to get into the Throne, and set up himself and his own way. When the *Nonconformists* are fallen mad, let them be used as such; but while there is any Wisdom in them, or these prevailing Principles of Religion and Obedience; their Enemies may bely them, and labour to make the malicious swallow as gross things as Transubstantiation, things against their senses; but they will confute them by their Patience. But suppose them to be overstored and set with the Seeds of Rebellion and Sedition; what is Sedition, but the * *disturbance of the publick Peace*, as it is defined by the Lawyers. Now either they can command and restrain those ill Inclinations; if so, they are wise and quiet; or they cannot; then they are rash and stomachful. Is it not therefore better to let them be quiet while they are so, than provoke them by Mulcts and Ruine to make Insurrections? especially at such a time when we have Enemies in our very Bowels, that can take the advantage of a Diversion. The State can get nothing, by the best effect of troubling of them, but Peace, and that is had without troubling of them: It is better to forbear a needless Trouble, than to make it.

* *Seditio est publicæ Pacis Perturbatio.* Calvin. *Lexicon Juridicum.* But secondly, It may be thought better for the Church, to execute the Laws upon them than forbear them, and therefore it will be better for the State.

For the proof of this, there is one end proposed by the Law, in reference to the Church, To prevent, or cure the mischief of Schism. It is but vain to talk of preventing Schism; the Seed of that was scattered before, and took Root; the thing now to be desired, is the Cure of the Distraction, or Schism: The Method of curing, is by an effectual Application of Law and Power; of which Application, there are but two things to be looked for;

1. A gaining of the *Dissenters* to the Church, and that is Union. A happy Effect! if it can be produced.

2. The second Benefit will be, a Reduction of them to their stinted Numbers of Four besides the Household; you can never suppress them by this Execution, for the Law hath provided against a total Suppression of them, by a tacit allowance of different Worship to such a Number.

I pass over one Advantage, which may be aimed at; It will drive some out of Corporations, and further from their former Parishes, or places of Residence,

Residence, for this is but inconsiderable. For first, many have taken the Oath, and explained their sense, they may stay; and for them who have not, they may exchange with others; and you are but where you were, except the putting of them to a new, and greater Charge; which is not merciful, except you propose a publick Good: Besides, Corporations can choose Parliament-Men without their Influence or Direction, if that be of any Consideration.

To the first of these two, I observe your Proposition is this, *It is better to gain, and unite the Nonconformist Dissenters to the Church, than to permit them to meet as they do.* That's granted you in the general, but come to the way and means, and assume this: But the severe Execution of the Laws upon them, will bring them in, and unite them; therefore, *dictum factum!* But do you think so in earnest? You may as well say, that Informers were ordained to convert Souls, to reclaim straying Schismatics, and that there is more Power in Law and Justice, than in Law and Grace.

But first, How many *Anabaptists* and *Quakers* have been converted by Excommunications, Imprisonments, and Fines?

2. You may restrain many from going to Conventicles, that's certain, but what's the Church the better for that? They go not to Conventicles, but may they not stay at home, wander abroad, and do as thousands of our miserable Persons do, that come to the Font by Baptism, but not near the Pulpit and the Communion-Table! But suppose these Conventiclers will be better than thousands, and come to Church; then either they are convinced, and change their Judgments, or retain their Judgments, and still hold Schismatical Opinions. How can you expect to change their Judgments, or gain their Affections, by punishing or threatening? The greatest Good you can propose to them, is to bring them to Parish-Preachers. But what if either want of Preaching, or want of good profitable intelligible Preaching, was the cause of their going to them they liked better, and got spiritual Good by? Indeed if you could engage to them, that if they forsake their Preachers, you will provide holy, profitable, and painful Preachers in all places, which you can never do, then you might gain them; but if they come to our Churches against their Judgments, then you convert the Schismatick into a Hypocrite, or Atheist, and to serve God, because it is the Religion of the Country, And what will the Church be the better for such? Alas! we have more of such already, than we know what to do with.

3. Is it probable you will ever gain such to an Uniformity, that have been many Years settled in their Dissatisfactions? and from the first day of their Ejection reckoned what it would cost them? and since these Additional Acts have been made, are as resolute as ever; and that are so

convinced it is their Duty to preach, and hear, and worship God in the way they have chosen, that they look for a Reward in Heaven! Is it likely that they who think their present Sufferings will be rewarded in future Glory, will for their temporal losses of Goods, &c. be converted by a Warrant of a Justice? It can never be rationally expected; you may ruin them, but it is next impossible to bring them over to the Church, as long as the matters of Offence remain unremoved, or unabated.

4. Was ever a *Nonconformist* before the Year 1670, or 71, brought to Conformity by that Severity? You may rather think they will do, as then they did, be more retired, but as much resolved. And that which is, as you account better, seems to me either unattainable, or undesirable. If they may not have Liberty to meet in publick, they will take that course which is left them; and that is to meet, not exceeding four, besides the the Family: And then your Proposition will be this, It is better to force the *Dissenters* by severe Penalties to their private Houses, and their stinted Numbers, than permit them to meet as they do, contrary to Law.

Well then, you say it is better to confine them to their Houses, and to the Number four over and above, than to permit them as they do. But for what Reasons? observe we are upon this Head, as it is better for the Church. And that to cure or prevent further Schism, I can imagine but these Reasons for it:

1. Because their Nonconformity will not carry such a direct and open Opposition to the established Worship.
2. Because they cannot corrupt such Numbers.
3. This will break and weaken them.
4. Because, when it will be so difficult for them to meet, they may rather, being tired, come to our Parish-Churches.

But will you conclude your Argument upon any, or upon all these Reasons? which is, That it will cure the Schism, and prevent insinuating Schismatical Principles. Let us come up to the first.

First, I say, that you cannot prove the publick preaching of the *Nonconformists* to be an Opposition to the Church, any more than the *French, Dutch, and Lutheran Churches*, and Preaching. To preach the same Doctrine (as to the general matter) to the same holy Design, Instruction, Conversion, Edification, and Salvation, to pray and praise God by the Spirit in the name of Christ, is not a way opposite to the Church of *England*, or contrary to it, but onely privative it is, as to the Omission of the Form or Liturgy. The Agreement and Consent, and Cooperation, is greater than the Difference or Dissimilitude. If they preached contrary
Doctrine

Doctrine to a contrary End, it were an open Opposition; and yet let us remember, The *Jews* the Enemies of Jesus Christ, have their publick Synagogue more intolerable, we may think, than the publick preaching of Orthodox Christians.

2. But because they presume upon the Favour of our Governours, if it be offensive suppose they'll forbear; doth the supposed Schism cease, by their Secrecy? not at all: But here seems to be a greater Schism, or Separation (such as it is) than the publick. 1. Because here's Private in Opposition to Publick. The Church worships God openly in Churches, they privately in a Room. 2. Because if this meeting in private be schismatical, it is the more legal, and the more legal, the more safe and secure. 3. The Schismaticks, (I'll call them so for fashion sake) are multiplied by this means. Break up the publick into twenty or fourty private ones, and then for one in publick, there will be twenty or fourty Schismatical Meetings. It is true, they are still obnoxious to other Laws; but they are discharged from the Severity of this, and thus you count the Multiplication of Schismatical Separate Meetings, a Gain to the Church: take it! see what you get; your Will, and what more?

Your second Reason is, Because they cannot corrupt such Numbers.

But, 1. I say Orthodox Preaching and Praying, is not corrupting; I have shewed them to be able and sound Men.

2. Multitudes will grow more corrupt, for want of their sound and frequent Preaching.

3. If they be heretical and erroneous, they will do more Mischief by this keeping within the compass of the Law, than by presuming beyond the Law. *Vid. Page 60 of the Plea, first Part.*

4. But corrupt or not, is not the point, the Schism is not healed by it, therefore it is not better to restrain, &c.

Thirdly, you say, This will break and weaken them. It may do so indeed. But except the Church gets them into Conformity, which it is not like to do (as was said before) how is the Schism cured? but indeed sound Christianity will be in danger of losing, and our Church past hope of getting.

To your fourth Reason I answer.

1. True, it will be difficult, and inconvenient for them to meet; they will tire and kill their Preachers; but what gets our Church by that? Is the Schism repaired?

2. They will (I'll say as you would have it) come to Church, but whither, and to whom? to few some famous Preachers, for they will hear but the best, till there be no room? and what then? Those famous Preachers shall bear the Reproach of being popular, and Fautors of the Faction, and inclining to the Party, and will be no better than the *Nonconformists*; and how will the Wound be healed when Emulation and Envy encreaseth, and the *Dissenter* will be a Temporizer, and a Church-Schismatick, and the *Conformist* that tolls him in. Now you having shewed (for now I fancy my self disputing) the Good of Execution, and have not gained the point; give me leave to shew you the Good of Forbearance of the Execution; and as bad as things now are, they are better than they can be, if Rigor be used.

It is an unspeakable Mercy, that things are no worse, that things are so well as they are between *Protestants* this day in *England*. I do not remember, when it was ever better, especially considering the means that have been used to break us; yet there is nothing in this more to be desired, than either a Christian Forbearance, or a Composition with our Dissenting Brethren in Christ, next to Heavenly Communion with Christ. But better, things should remain as they are, than be made worse, by drawing the Sword, tho in the quarrel of the Church. I do not now meddle with the Controversies between the Church and *Dissenters*, to justify the Separation; altho in my own Judgment, I call it a different way of Worship, of Professors of the same Faith, and not a Schism or a schismatical sinful Separation. The Church of *Jerusalem*, might better call the Gentile Churches Schismaticks, than we can call them: and the *Romanists* may with more Reason call us Schismaticks, than we call one another; for we broke off from that Church, established by the Laws then in being, and in long Possession; we separated from them principally for imposed new corrupt Doctrines, and Conditions of Communion, and justify our Separation, and will not suffer to be called Schismaticks; They have a Creed and a Worship, which was never in the Word of God; our Brethren agree in the same avowed publick Creeds and Doctrines, and all the parts of Gospel-Worship. And it is more brotherly to denominate them from their Agreement with us, than from their Dissent and Disagreement from us. — But I must not digress, and this I humbly submit.

The thing now to be done, is to make the best of our Differences, and what's best to be done as the Case stands. It is better, as more conducing to the ends of the Laws by which you proceed to suppress them: Therefore it is better. The ends of the Laws have been declared above, as respecting the State and the Church.

1. With respect to the State. When they preach in publick, they are known to be the same Men, that upon Principles of Loyalty, and Conscience prepared the People, or concurred with the Loyal Nobles, and Gentlemen and Commonalty of *England*, to bring back the King. They are known to the Land, which once accounted them a Blessing to it, their Judgments and Practises are known, and while these are in the head of the younger *Dissenters*, they are as Directions and Examples to them, to keep them from dangerous Excursions. When His Majesty was moved to grant an Indulgence, the indulged were to give their Names, and their Places, which they did, and this was cautiously done, for the safety of the Kingdom, there being less danger from a Person known, than one unknown, and a great Obligation upon a known Person to keep within tolerable Bounds. Our greatest Dangers have been from Persons of many Names, many changes of Wiggs and Habits, and moving up and down the Land in secret, and Disguises.

2. It is better for the State. For when learned and good Men have their publick Liberty, they will by sound Doctrine, teach, perswade, exhort, reprove, instruct them in their Duties to God, to the King, &c. Charge them to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates. And while they preach sound Doctrine, one end of the Magistrate's Care to the State is obtained.

3. They cannot possibly sow Sedition, or move Insurrections in publick Assemblies, if they were so wickedly disposed. The safety of King and Kingdom, and the Confidence of the King and Kingdom may rest undoubted, as to any ill Designs of those Preachers, while they preach in publick. And I do humbly offer it to the Consideration of all Loyal, Protestant Magistrates, to forbear to drive them into private Houses by their Severities, because under colour of private Meetings, our destroying, perfidious Enemies of *Rome*, may sow Sedition, and further plot upon *Protestants*. They may as well proclaim a Rebellion at the *Exchange*, *Cheapside*, or in a Parish-Church, as preach it in one of their Meeting-places.

4. It is better they should be spared than prosecuted, because they will be better enabled and more encouraged to perform other Offices and Duties to the King and State, than they can possibly, by being ruined in their Estates.

5. They have many Friends and Relations in the Church of *England*, which must suffer many ways, in their Poverty and undoing; It will be a Tenderness and Kindness to them, to have them spared, and not beggared, or forced to leave the Kingdom.

Lastly, It is certain, that it conduceth more to the publick Peace: for when *Dissenters* are connived at, and gratified, they are so far obliged and

and owned; and even when their private Dissatisfactions remain, their Liberty being so far indulged, they have no cause to complain of the Magistrate; and while they are not disturbed by him, committing nothing that is provoking, they even from Interest and love of Quietness, if their Conscience of Duty lay dormant in them, will not disturb him that permits them. The publick Peace is best secured, when Men of private Opinions keep them private, and have no disturbance given to their Peace. I do not speak this, as if I feared their Turbulency, but granting for Argument sake, that they have Touchwood in them, keep Fire from incensing it, and it will do no harm.

Secondly, Forbearance will be better for the Church, and prevent a greater Schism, against which the Laws seem to fortify it.

1. By their publick preaching, or as they can. We have a great considerable number of able Men, that influence the People, that are agreed with us, against the Force and Subtily of *Rome*: therefore the more we have against them, the stronger we are. Indulge the *Dissenters*, and you secure them, but if not, they'll be afraid of you, and you afraid of them, and by your mutual Fears and Jealousies, the *Papists* get what they get, and not by meer Nonconformity.

2. By this publick way they walk with you, according to the same Rule, as far as they have attained, and that this is near enough for Forbearance.

3. The Scandal that is given to foreign reformed Churches is abated, and a great Example given to them that have long contended, under the name of *Luther* and *Calvin*, and others, of Calmness and Forbearance.

4. The Schism will come hereby to a greater Closure than otherwise it will; for when the Church is satisfied by their profitable Preaching, and peaceable Deportment, they cannot but conceive better of them, and desire a Peace and Union, and abate some things which they stand upon; and when they do taste the Sweetness of the Bishops Temper, they will love and honour them; and the Differences that remain, will appear to be only such, as may be between good Men and Brethren.

5. By this publick Preaching, Multitudes of poor Souls that know not whither else to go, and Multitudes that will go no where else, are kept in the way of Salvation, and Profession of the Gospel: And this is that, which some Divines of the Church of *England* are so sensible of, that they treat the *Nonconformists* as Friends and Fellow-Labourers; I could if need were instance in some Great Men, and great Places where this is true.

The second Branch of the Comparison now comes to be handled, and then the Argument runs thus: It is better that *Protestant Dissenters* should be spared, or freed from the Penalties of the Laws, than be prosecuted; for the Evils of Execution, will be greater than the Evils of Forbearance.

I am to remember my own Question, and therefore I am not concerned in the Question about Separation, either the Sinfulness or Excusableness of it, which hath been lately largely debated, but what is best to be done at this time, and in this posture of Affairs.

The Unhappiness and Evils of our divided State, have been considered by Divines and States-men. The Divines have opened them in the Pulpit and in Print, and have driven different ways, to the same end, the Union and the Preservation of the Church; some representing the Mischief, have taken the more moderate way of Persuasion, abhorring Persecution, and have so managed their Discourse, as to take off the People from their Teachers, and to bring them to the Church, because there is nothing required of them, but what many of their Teachers allow to be lawful. This way did tend towards Union of the People. Others have urged an Execution of the Laws upon the Brethren, withal perswading them to believe, that they suffer as Evil-doers; and this is to bring home stray'd Sheep through Briars and Thorns.

Dr. Stillingfl. Mischief of Separation.

Dr. Ashton's Toleration disapproved.

Our great States-men have taken different Measures also. Some have moved for a severe Execution, and to force them to an intire Obedience, saying it was more reasonable they should submit to the Church, than the Church to them. Others being sensible of the Mischiefs, have stated the Case more exactly, and argued for an Union, and this prevailed in the Debate. No Man of Sense or Piety can be insensible of the Sickness of the Family; but whether it be better to kill some out-right, or to starve them, or to suffer them to live, may be easily determined. In a case of Discord and Contention between Brothers, whether it be best to accommodate, or to determine some shall have what they would, and others shall have nothing left, comes near the Case in hand.

Decemb. 21, 1680.

The Dangers of a Forbearance, are the same that were foretold would be the Consequences of an Indulgence, which was opposed by the Parliament in the Year 1662. That House of Commons did argue against an Indulgence, and for keeping up the Act of Uniformity, by way of Prophecy, and fore-sight of Consequences; and their humble Advices presented

to the King, contain the strongest Reasons against an Indulgence, that have been found out, and contain the great Inconveniences and Evils of a Forbearance. I will give you the Substance of them.

February 15, 1662. 1. An Indulgence will establish Schism by a Law, make the Government of the Church precarious, and the Censures of it, of no moment. 2. It will not become the Gravity or Wisdom of a Parliament, to pass a Law (of Uniformity) at one Session, and pass another to weaken it the next. 3. It will expose your Majesty to the restless importunity of every Sect, and every single *Dissenter*. 4. It will cause the Increase of Sectaries, whose Numbers will weaken the Protestant Religion; their Numbers being troublesome to the Government, will, as their Numbers increase, be more troublesome, and from an Indulgence arrive at a Toleration, at length contend for an Establishment, and end in *Popery*. 5. It will take away all means of convicting Recusants. 6. It is more like to occasion greater Disturbances, than Peace in the Kingdom.

But as Events prove Prophecies to be true or false, so Events have proved these Arguments to be weak or strong. That very Parliament, the true Protestant Part of it, that did faithfully serve their King and Country, with the Additions made to them by a latter Election to fill up vacant Places, saw where we were, and were sensible of the Necessity of uniting *Protestants* by Act of Parliament, and many of the Episcopal Divines, and some Bishops were for it. A clear Discovery, that the Mischiefs of our Divisions are of that sort, that it were better an Abatement were made of some things, made necessary to Uniformity, without which the *Dissenters* will not unite, than suffer them to hang over our Heads, and come upon us.

We plainly see that many of the Reasons of the Commons (1662) are of no Force. I will observe what is of present use to our times, which is the first. And

For the other, It became their Wisdom and their Religion to pass a Bill, taking from the Act of Uniformity. His Majesty hath not been molested with the Importunities of the *Dissenters*, who have not so much as opened their Grievances, or Petitioned the King or Parliament in these many Years.

There is no new Sect appearing, nor increase of any by the *Nonconformists*, to weaken the Protestant Religion, who have used Endeavours to increase and maintain it; it is in no danger from them, they are not troublesome to the Government, are not for a Toleration of intolerable Sects and Sectaries, contend not for an Establishment, which they would rejoyce in; but as becomes learned Men and rational, and with as great

a Temper, at least as theirs that write against them. The Peace of the Kingdom is not disturbed by them, and if *Poper*y come in, it is against their Wills, Prayers and Pains to expose and and baffle it. It is their Trouble, and a considerable part of their Affliction, that they are thought troublesome to the Government, which may by an ordinary Exercise of Patience and Love overcome the Trouble in their own Breast, which is the seat of the Trouble. And for the only remaining Evil, which is the Evil of Schism, it is clear that their Meetings are not established by Law, and a Connivance gives no Establishment to it; but if they be driven from publick, into private Families, and keep within their Number, the Schism remains, as great and greater than otherwise (as I said before) out of the reach, and under protection from the Law. What the Evils of a Forbearance are, we see, but what the Evils of an Execution of the Laws may prove we cannot see; but morally and rationally speaking, they will be greater than now we suffer.

I must premise this, That if you proceed with rigor, you do unspeakable Hurt; if not, you cannot do the Good you pretend: There must be a Concurrence of all Magistrates, in all places, to take the same Course; and as you must concur, so you must be sure that the King will shut up his Royal Bowels and Clemency, or some particular Men will but become hateful to their Countries; and His Majesties Mercy will condemn their Severity. This was so well understood by an Honourable Member of Parliament, that he moved for ways to compel the *Dissenters* to an intire Obedience, and submit to the Church, by severe Penalties.

This will be the ready way to *undo all*, if any thing do it; which as to His Majesties Person and Government, I do confidently hope, and rationally believe, is but a great word of Fancy, an Oratorical Scarecrow. The mischiefs of our Separation are laid open to this purpose. 1. Great Hazards of unsettling all. 2. Alienation of Hearts. 3. Advantage of our common Enemies (the *Papists*.) I borrow the Heads of Mischiefs, and argue, If the Mischiefs of Separation, while there is a cessation of Prosecutions, be so great, much more when Prosecution cannot heal the Separation, but encrease the Causes.

1. It will, beyond all recovery, *undo all Men*, that have been so many Years the more bold to assemble, because of the Lenity of His Majesty, and the Propensity of our many Parliaments, from 1673, to accommodate the Difference; and the inferiour Magistrates have found no evil Designs among them, to give disturbance to the Government, and many of the Judges in their Charges, have turned the point of the Sword upon our secret Enemies, that would openly do more against us all, than is yet to be

Mischief of Separation. p. 13. & p. 22, 23, 52.

done against our Brethren; and if other Judges have turned the Edge of the Law against *Protestants*, our Magistrates have not been forward to take the Hilt and lay on; how many thousands by their Presumption upon Lenity, have been more open than they would have been? But suppose they spare the Sheep, and take away the Shepherds, the Destruction will be great; *All*, the most of them have, will not satisfy this Debt to the Law. Is it not enough for them to be dispossessed of their Preferments, to be driven from place to place, but once more they must be undone, without regard to Age, Sickness, Infirmities, Families, Debts, Poverty? If they have many Friends, their Friends must suffer in their Sufferings, if they have none, or few, they are the more undone; their Sufferings will not terminate upon them. Who shall set them up again? bring up their Children? feed and cloath them? their Ruine will be an intolerable Oppression upon many parts of the Kingdom.

2. Will not this unsettle the Affections, wherein the strength of Government doth consist (together with Religion and Conscience) of thousands more, than can be spared, if other Dangers arise? And if Religion and Conscience oblige them to love their Persecutors and pray for them, they will never dare to trust them. A mutual Trust and Confidence is a great Strength in time of common danger; when we are distracted in Affections, we shall be distracted in Reason, and Counsel, and when we are so, then's the time for a Popish Army to unsettle all.

It is well known that the *Dissenters* are a great, and an active Part of the Kingdom, and if they suffer by *Protestants*, they will be afraid to unite with them; and therefore to persecute them is as ill a Service, as to cut off a great and potent Part of Religious and Industrious Men from our main Strength, when we most stand in need of increasing Friendship, Confidence and Strength. The unsettling of Affection, moving of Passion, which Religion cannot subdue in all, is an effectual way to unsettle all.

3. The Prosecution of *Dissenting-Protestants*, tends to no other end, but to disunite Affections; it is to use Force without Reason, or Persuasion. The Reason of the Dissenting Brethren is as far from Satisfaction, as to our Conformity, as ever; and their Satisfaction in their Dissent, do daily increase: to use Force without Reasons, is not reasonable; and that Force which is used to suppress and cut off, must needs be to disunite the Hearts of Men. To suppress them, signifies plainly, they have no value for them, that they hate them, as unworthy to dwell in any place but a Goal, or to ly upon any Bed but Straw. They are first exiled from their good Thoughts and Opinions; next from their Affections; next they are judged insufferable; and they that would drive them out of all, would proceed to Banishment, and then he that is not thought worthy to live with

with us in the same Land, is reputed next him that is not worthy to live at all; and is this the way to win their Affections! and if they should force any to abjure his native Country, they force him against Nature, and that is to root out Affection.

Now suppose the *Dissenters* are not wholly yours, yet if you cared for them at all, you would nourish some Inclinations in them, and not thrust them from you, but drive in those Inclinations to Peace with you.

4. It is plainly the making of a Breach among *Protestants*. The more weak and passionate will be far more out with the Bishops, than they were before. 1. Because, they at the first refused to condescend, and procured that Act of Uniformity, by which they must needs know a vast Breach would follow. 2. Because they can look upon the Suffering of *Protestants* without Compassion, so much as not to make Intercession for them. The Brethren, and all that suffer in them, will be tempted to hate the Bishops, and say, this doth proceed from them, or some of them. And this is another way to unsettle all. Besides, it tends to divide the Hearts of the ignorant, and rash, censorious Multitude from their Fellow-Christians, as if they were worse than *Papists*, as Enemies to the King and Government, as Disturbers of Order by their Preaching and Preciseness. It will alienate abundance of People, that either actually suffer, or have any Compassion to them that suffer, from abundance of Conforming Ministers, who help on the work of pulling down of Conventicles. And this is another means that will co-operate to our unsettlement of all.

5. This is the way to unsettle all, by undoing what hath been done towards an Accommodation or an Union, both by late Honoured, and ever to be Honoured Parliaments, from the Year 1673, to the last at *Westminster*; and all the Endeavours of our Reverend Fathers, Protestant Divines, and Gentlemen, towards a desirable Union. As a Treaty of Peace tends to a Settlement, so the breaking of a Treaty tends to an unsettlement; this zealous Prosecution, is like a vowing there shall be no Peace; for it plainly breaks off the Treaty.

6. This tends to unsettle all, as it is an open, violent rushing against the Reason of our late Protestant Parliaments. As their Reasons and Debates, did determine in a Resolve for Settlement; so these out of Enmity against them, and their Proceedings, labour to unsettle all, before they can have time to meet, to offer any thing towards a happy Settlement; to divide the King from his Parliament, to undo what many Parliaments have resolved to do, to prosecute *Protestants* against the minds of *Protestants*, to disgrace the Name, and to break and weaken the Thing, is also the way to unsettle all.

7. Except they deal worse by our *Protestant Nonconformists*, than they would deal with *Papists*, they can but drive them to their private Houses and Corners; and keep them to them (and another Argument from this Head doth offer it self) will be a greater Evil, than what the Church or State can ever suffer from open Meetings. And that as operating more ways than one.

1. Because our Hearts will be more divided, Mens Passions incensed, Mens Reasons sharpened, and all ways of Reconciliation stopped; the conquering Church-men will not offer Treaties, the broken and oppressed Church will not be heard, all their Arguments and Books will operate no more, than the Tears of the afflicted soften the Hearts of them that afflict them.

2. The Schism then will so far be protected, that this Law against Conventicles cannot touch them; and I do humbly conceive, that this

Act against Conventicles was never intended for *I mean the Oxford the Good or Growth of the Church of England, or the Protestant Cause.* 1. Because they that moved

in it, were moved by a Spirit of Popery, is notoriously known, who were *Sir Tho. Cl.* and the rest abovenamed. 2. It was as cunning a subterraneous Conveyance for *Popery*, as could be thought of, to be made by a Law. It seeming to be to serve the Church, was help'd forward by the Zealots for the Church; but what was more contrary to the Church, than a secret Schism privileged by the Law, that forbade an open one? 3. It was most likely to be perpetuated, the closer it was kept and free from Punishment. 4. They who were then *Papists* in a Disguise, and when they thought it time, threw off the Disguise, could so manage the Business, as procure a Toleration of *Papists*, but it shall go under the name of Favour to *Protestant Dissenters*. For the Merits of the *Papists* pleaded for them a share of the Favour, granted to *Nonconformists*, that deserved so ill. An oppressive Act, made way for an easing Toleration, which the Parliament well perceived the Year following, and then crossed the Contrivances for *Popery*, and saw that *Popery* had got by the Toleration and their own Act, and moved for a Revocation of both. 5. The *Protestant Dissenters*, without any difference of their Principles were by this Law rendred suspicious, and thereby odious, as conveying poisonous Preparations to Rebellion in their Preaching; the lurking Jesuits, and com-plotting *Papists*, might carry on their firing and murdering Projects, and when any Mischief broke out, the suspected *Protestant* might next way suffer for it, or be brought in question; so that if State-Policy shine out into a Favour to *Dissenters*, the Meritorious *Loyal Jesuits and Papists* shall go Partners with them. If State-Inquisitors smell a Fire or Gun powder, the suspected

Dissenter.

Dissenter shall have the *odium* of it, and the *Papists* appear bold-fac'd, as a truly Loyalist, and who dare speak Truth of his untainted Innocence and Greatness? 6. These dissimbling Jesuits, might creep into Conventicles, into any of them, and do their Work according to their Art; exclaim against the rigor of the Laws, unmercifulness of the Bishops, defame the King, and a hundred Mischiefs, as many as they could invent; seduce, and pervert the King's Subjects, and be much pleas'd to hear the aspiring *Conformist* talk at his highest rate against the *Nonconformists*, and plant his Great Guns against *Geneva*, and bring up more Stories out of the Acts of the *Presbyterians*, than the Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs, burnt by the *Papists*. It must needs delight the *Papists*, to hear a zealous Ignorant, be-rogue and damn the House-Preachers, such as creep into Corners, when they durst not shew themselves, as undoubted *Protestants* in the Pulpits.

And what Advantage the *Papists* made of our Divisions first; and next of this Suppression of learned and able Men, they will make a Gain, and if the ill Effects of their evil Spirits, be not greater than any Evil, which the open Meetings can be charged with, I'll say no more but this one thing, which shall conclude this Argument, and I am sure it deserves a reading, and a great deal more, from every Loyal Protestant Christian.

It is the greatest Mischief that can come to our Government, and true Religion, to give the *Papists* the least Advantage and Opportunity of carrying on either Conspiracies, or false and damnable Doctrines, or to do greater Harm than ever they have done; and these Advantages and Opportunities they will have by driving the *Nonconformists* into private Houses.

1. The old sound, pious, and excellent Men of the *Nonconformists*, grow few and thin, Death lays them up safe from all Evils to come. This is so far from being commodious to the Church, as it is Christian, and Protestant, (mark, I do extend Protestancy beyond Conformity) that it is a great Loss without a great Supply; for I'll speak my Conscience, in giving them due Honour, they were and are constant Students and laborious Residents, learned, skilful, successful, and deservedly had in Honour by discerning and honest Men. These were of Loyal Principles, and sought Peace, with Truth and Purity, and as little as they were regarded, they were regarded more than most young Men will be a long time. The Dissenting Party will walk in their wonted Paths, both from their Education, Prejudices, Principles and Convictions, they will hear in Private, they must have Preachers, their Preachers cannot be in many Places, they must have Supplies, their Supplies will be young Men.

Young Men and bred Scholars will be but comparatively too few; and what then? It will be a temptation to Men of Confidence, to go beyond their Line; spiritual Pride will puff them up, as Men of Gifts; yet the pretence of Wants, and conceit of Gifts will endanger many. Now, now, if ever, here's an Opportunity for the Boys of *St. Omers*, who can tell the Tales their Masters teach them, to come into *England*; here's work for them! Can they not ly, and say they are the Sons of *Nonconformists*, tutor'd under *Nonconformists*? cannot they ly to damn the Souls of H-reticks, as confidently as they did to save the Lives of Traitors? cannot they pretend they were born and bred in *New England*. To the weaker and credulous *Independents*, that know not Men, as their able Ministers do, they may say, they were brought up by such *Independents*. To the *Quakers*, they may pretend Conversion, and come a great way off, or give them the Honour of bringing them out of Darknes; and so through all. And why cannot they make use of the Miseries of our persecuted Brethren in *France*! and speake a little broken *English*, and say they are *French Protestants*, intended for the Ministry, or bred in some of their Universities, and who can disprove them! what cannot a lying young Generation do? Preach against *Papery* in some points to bring it in. We read what work one *Whitebread* did in Meetings of several Perswasions; and why not more take the same seducing Trade. But when Nonconforming Ministers are known, and appear in the open view of the Church and Kingdom, they are accountable for what they preach and do; and if any secret Conspiracies, pernicious Doctrines, Atheism, Blasphemy, are sowed, or fomented, the Innocent may be known, and the Guilty the sooner discovered.

And thus I have gone thorough my whole Argument, and I hope said something aptly to prove my Question, That it is better the Execution of the Penal Laws be forborn, than urged at this time, if not altogether.

Having stated, and I hope offered some considerable Proof of that part of the Question which I have chosen, tho furthest out of the Sun of Humane Favour; I shall draw another Division of Arguments to guard and maintain it, and to turn back the Force that comes out against it. If there be any Reason in what hath been offered, then I hope, I shall meet with some Inclinations, in wise and good Men, to be perswaded to take that Course which is proved to be the best: I am sure wise Men will choose that which is best, and good Men will not exercise Severity without urgent Cause, and a rational Foresight of Advantage. I humbly desire these following Arguments may find due Regard.

First, The Wisest, Holiest, and most Catholick Governours of the Church, have by long Experience found that Reason, Conviction, and Calmness, have been the winning ways upon scrupulous Persons; or else it cannot in Charity be thought, that they would come behind others, in accomplishing the work of Peace and Uniformity. They cannot but know what Destruction, without Reformation, will follow Excommunications, if they proceed to Writs, and follow the Course of Law to the uttermost. Many of our Ecclesiastical Courts have taken that way, and can any of them, shew us any one Man converted to Uniformity by it? Many have removed from one Country and Diocess to another, and wrought themselves out of Trouble, or abide in them to this day: But can they shew any one Man they have brought over to a sincere and hearty Conformity? Their Molestations go nearer the Heart to separate them, than to unite them. If the Church should for Nonconformity proceed to Sentence, and thence to Writs, and thence to Execution, what way can they take more effectual to disoblige the Nation? The Gentleman and Landlord suffers in the ruine and loss of his Tenant; the thousands of poor Families that live by Manufactures, suffer in the Losses or Removes of their Masters; and as many as actually suffer, of what Condition soever, and their Families and Posterity that suffer in them, are made the poorer, but never the better Christians; they are all disoblighd and broken from us. Besides, they know the charge of their Dissent, which is often-times no more than, pay your Fees, and go home. The Officers of Courts get; but what doth the Church get thereby? It is visible, that those parts of the Land have the most for number, and the most resolute *Nonconformists*, that have been most severely used. The more many Men suffer, the more Arguments they gather for the Goodness of the Cause for which they suffer. The far greater part of our Church-Governours, have abstained from rigorous Courses. Now the Civil Magistrates are rowzing up, and awake, as out of sleep. But what's the Cause of this Excitation? The Conservators of the Peace are harnessing themselves for the Defence of Church and State. But what fear of the King's Life: Is it not the Acclamation of all *Protestants* (is there in this, one *Dissenter* among them) *Long may the King live.* Who doth hold up a Finger to shake the Throne or Government? or who is there that hath heard of as much as a whisper of any Conspiracy? If there be, God who seeth in secret, reveal it quickly, by the Guilty themselves; and there is no likelihood of a Concealment, (if there be such a thing) for none but beggarly mad Men can be in it; the service then must be done to the Church: The Magistrates rise up in Defence of it. But doth not the Magistrates Vigilancy reproach the

the Severity, and Sleepiness of the Watchmen? how can any, that at other times and occasions do not talk with any great Concern, Affection, or Reverence of the Bishops, now be so zealous? If the Bishops should proceed with one mind, roundly to Excommunications, and break up Families by it; who would sooner complain than Gentlemen that suffer by it? who more earnest, or be more complemental in Intercessions! But now, why should they be so forward to undo great Numbers to the apparent detriment of the Common-wealth, when the Bishops are so backward to give them, their Friends, or their Dependents Trouble? What Alterations will the Execution make, in Rents and Trade? and who will sooner feel the Effects, than he who takes his Ease, and lives high, and cannot bear the fall of his Revenues? If the Magistrate appear in his Power, when the Church calls for his help, it will be duty, and self-denial too, to take part of the *Odium* of what is counted a Persecution, but to hazard the breaking of many thousands, who can in some parts of the Kingdom make a Rise, or fall of Commodities, and the loss and trouble of abundance more by Participation to their own Dishonour, is a greater Kindness to the R. R. Bishops than was expected, or can be rewarded with their Blessing.

Secondly, It is more God-like, Christian, and Humane, to use Clemency, and follow the Examples of the Indulgent, especially when the hurtful Effects of Severity are great and apparent, and the Benefit doubtful. God is wise, just, and holy. But continues to uphold the World by Mercy. Christianity is full of Mercy, and the Author of it is a Reconciler, and Mediator. Human Nature, so given to offend, would be destroyed, but for Love, Forbearance, and Mercy. Mercifulness is like the soft Cement, that binds all the Stones in the Fabrick of Human Society, which else would never hold together, but fall without it. Without it Men are like rugged Stones, and Severity doth not square, but chop, and should never be exercised, but when Society cannot be preserved without it. If this Age will follow Examples of the most exact and strict Governours, it will find more room for Mercy, than hath been shewn to them that have been excluded for want of it. But if it will set it self for an Example, it is a question whether wise Posterity will follow it. The High Commission Court was a kind of Inquisition, so the wise Lord Treasurer *Burleigh* wrote to Arch-Bp *Whitgift*, 'But according to my simple Judgment, Fuller's Ch. History 'said he, this kind of proceeding is too much favouring the *Romish* Inquisition. And of all Men, B. ix. An. 1583. 'the *Puritans* felt the weight of it. The *Puritans*

were

were opposite to the Bishops and their Government, and Courts, and they made themselves and the Queen, their Government and Hers all one ; what was said or done against them, was done against Her Majesty. And the Opposition between the Puritan Discipline, and the Episcopal, was greater than hath been urged ever since the King's Return. If Church-History were silent, we may learn from the Canons of 1603, what Language was common in those times : But now the Controversy is not between the *Presbyter* and the *Bishop*, but between *Bishops* acting in a narrow Room and a larger Diocese; yet they are not discontent if the King shall honour some, as he doth, with Lordship, nor continue their Revenues. The *Independents* (supposed to be *Brownists*, but are not) give not the Language of Antichristian, to Bishops, or our Congregations ; but look upon us as parts of the Catholick Church.

The Bishops are Antichurchians (as against their Congregational Power) but not Antichristian, which was the Language of the *Brownists* ; but those that were more opposite, or hung off, were more kindly used. Mr. Fox a N. C. held his Prebend of *Salisbury* ; Dr. *Humphreyes* was Dean of *Winchester*, President of *Magdalen Colledg*, and *Regius-Professor* in *Oxford* ; Mr. *Tho. Cartwright*, the Head of the N. C. was at last much favoured by his mighty Antagonist, *A. B. Whitgift*, made Master of the Hospital in *Warwick*, and preached there to his Death ; Mr. *Travers*, ordained by *Presbyters* in *Antwerp*, after a sharp Controversy with Mr. *Hooker*, was made Provost of *Trinity Colledg* near *Dublin*, by *A. B. Loftus*, Chancellor of *Ireland* ; *Rob. Brown*, that deserved worst, held his Rectory of *A-Church* ; Mr. *Stone* continued in his Parsonage of *Warkton* ; *A. B. Whitgift*, whose (Stiff) constancy was known and proved, wrote thus to the Lord Treasurer *Burleigh* ;

‘ My Proceedings are neither so vehement, nor so general against Ministers and Preachers, as some pretend, doing me therein great Injury. In another to Sir *F. Walsingham* ; ‘ I have forbore to suspend or deprive any Man, already placed in any Cure or Charge for not subscribing. Only Bishop *Anthony Rudd*, in his Speech in Convocation, *An.* 1604, said, ‘ That many Learned Preachers enjoyed

‘ their Liberty, conditionally that they did not by Word or Deed, openly disgrace, or disturb the State established, (would that do now, we should see a return of many

As in Mr. Udal's Examination and Trial, is to be seen, Pr. Lond. 1643. Can. 4, 6, 9, 11.

Dr. Owen of Church-Peace, &c. Dr. Goodwin on the Epbes. 3.35.

See Fuller's Hist. B. ix.

Ibid. p. 139.

See Addenda to the first Plea.

cast out, if not of all.) What need I say of the Indulgence of Arch-Bishop Abbot? Remarkable is that Discourse between *A. B. Bancroft* (who was a sharp Adversary of the *Puritans*) with a *N. C.* An honest able Man protested to him, that it went against his Conscience to conform, which way (quoth the *A. B.*) will you live, if put out of your Benefice?

Full. B. 10. p. 57.

The Minister answered, He had no way but to go a begging, or put himself on the Divine Providence: Not that, said the *A. B.* you shall not do so, but come to me, and I will take order for your Maintenance. Many had Lectures, or were connived at by Bishops, or protected by Great Men,

Second Part of the Defence against Dr. Stillingfleet, c. 4.

Hist. B. ix. p. 135. Sect. 18.

as is proved in Particulars by Mr. Baxter. Pertinent is that to my purpose which Dr. Fuller writes, of some in the Time of *Q. Elizab.* Reign.

'The Practises of the *Presbyterians*, now found so much Favour, as almost amounted to a connivance at their Discipline. For whilst the Severity of the State was at this time intended to the height against the Jesuites; some Lenity of Course (by the very Rules of Opposition) fell to the share of the *Nonconformists*, on the score of their notorious Enmity to the Jesuitical Party. The Earl of Leicester procured great Favour for them, from the Queen, and snibbed the Bishops for urging Subscriptions. The great and wise States-men, were Intercessors for some of them, witness the Letters of the Lord Treasurer *Burleigh*, and Sir *F. Walsingham*, in that Church-History. But now, is there no Mitigation to be looked for, when our present *N. C.* approach nearer to a Closure, and when their Opposition to the Jesuites, doth provoke that Party to strain all their Policies, Power and Malice against them. Consider if it be not a time to shew Mercy to our Brethren, and not to oppress them as Enemies, when the whole Protestant Interest among us, is saved by meer Mercy! How contrary will the impoverishing of them be, to that Duty, *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him Drink.* Surely if we ought to relieve an Enemy, so far as to keep him alive, we ought to spare our Brethren, and preserve them from a Necessity to beg their Bread. But here I seem to some, to beg a Question; I call them Brethren, when they are not. It is true, I do; and if they who profess the same Faith, Worship, and live under the same Laws, are not Brethren, have we any in any part of the World? Is there any Household of Faith, out of the Household of *Conformists*? If not, then our extream Zeal against *Nonconformists*, will carry us to *Donatism*, and confine the Church, within the Lines of our Uniformity. If to avoid this, we acknowledg a Catholick Church, out of those Bounds; then why shall not that Right be allowed to them

them that dwell among us, as well as to them that live in Forreign Nations, and differ as much from our Form of Discipline, as they do? If therefore they are Brethren, let them receive from us some Tokens of Affection, and not be burnt with the Marking-irons of Anger, as unfit Objects of any thing less than Exclusion from all Favour: And let not the Mercy, and Mildness of former times, come into Judgment against this Generation. I do hope there are many that have Sorrow in their Hearts daily for them, and that have Hearts of Flesh to them.

Arg. 3. Both Church-men and Magistrates, should forbear this Course of Rigor, for fear of being guilty of the great Sin of Persecution, or approaching near it. All good Christians should be tender of falling into degrees of that Sin, which in the highest degree, is proper to the Enemies of Christ. There are now none in any place of Power, but such have by Oaths and Tests, avowed themselves to be sincere and honest *Protestants*; and if they will hear Reason on their Brethrens behalf, what Mercy can *Protestants* expect from *Papists*, or perjur'd Hypocrites? Abstain from punishing, and hurting the Servants of Christ, lest ye be found fighting against God, and obstructing the Prosperity of Christ's Kingdom, by quenching any Light of the Gospel, because it is not set up in a branched Candlestick, or in the Church. They would all burn in the Church, but for something that keeps them out, in the Church-porch. Now as every Christian, that hopes for Salvation alone by Christ, should be afraid of hurting Christ in his Members; so must every Man be tender in affixing the Charge of Persecution upon any: which that I may not do, I will,

1. Open the nature of Persecution.
2. The kinds of it.
3. Consider what is said to free the Prosecution of the Laws, from being a Persecution.

First, To persecute, in this place, is taken in an ill sense, for any kind of Vexation, or Trouble, brought upon others, especially such as is grievous to be born; it is *ardenter*, Grot. in *Math.* 5. 10. *pertinaciter*, *diligenter insectari ad nocendum*; or as Petr. Ravan. others, To follow as a Hunter doth his Game.

In respect of the Sufferer, it must be causeless, and undeserved, and by Consequence not for doing ill: in respect of the Inflicter, it must be injurious; and in respect of the Cause, it must not be a civil Cause, but Religious in Whole or in Part. It is Persecution, if it strike at any part of Religion, or for any Exercise of Religion.

Secondly, There are many kinds and degrees of Persecution, distinguished by the Afflictors, Affliction, and Afflicted, and the Reasons, Causes, and Ends.

The menaced Sufferings of the *Nonconformists*, are not, 1. From an open professed Enemy of the Faith, but (what is marvellous) from Men professing the same Faith, as *Protestants*, the Power being in no other hand. 2. It is not for Christianity, for the Name of Christ, or being Christians. 3. It is not directly a suffering of Death, or Banishment, (tho it may come to it) as it is a proceeding upon the Act of the 17th and 22^d of our King; but such hath been the Zeal of some Justices in some parts of this Kingdom, as to threaten *Dissenters* with Abjuration, Banishment, and Death.

But ordinarily, the threatned Punishments are of loss of Goods, of Liberty to do good to Souls, of Imprisonment, for particular Acts and Exercises of the Christian Religion, only because performed in an undue manner, as to human particular Laws, by Preachers that have not conformed upon the imposed Terms of exercising their Ministry, and upon such as hear them, beyond such a Number; and these Punishments are threatned by Christian, Protestant Magistrates, against professedly Protestant Preachers and Hearers.

They who suffer, say, They suffer for Conscience and Religion, and therefore they are persecuted; they who punish them, say, It is not for Religion, but for doing ill.

Let us impartially examine the Case, as urged by the *Nonconformists*, and as defended by some *Conformists*. The *Nonconformists* argue thus;

Preaching and Praying are necessary Duties.

But the *Nonconformists* are punished for Preaching and Praying.

Therefore for necessary Duties; and by Consequence they are persecuted.

A Reverend, (and by his many serious Professions, which I admit) a good Man, undertakes to take off this Argument.

Indeed the Argument is laid down defectively, because the words of the Laws are upon pretence of Religious Exercises, there are other Exercises of Religion, besides Preaching and Praying.

The same Reverend Author doth distinguish to the *major* Proposition, and flatly denies the *minor*. Preaching and Praying (saith he) are necessary Duties, *quoad Substantiam*, but *quoad Circumstantias* they are not necessary, and he reckons some Circumstances, in which 'tis true, they are not necessary; as to two or three thousands, &c.

2. He utterly denies the *minor*, as false. They are punished for not observing those Circumstances (saith he) about Preaching and Praying, which Authority requireth; or, for not performing those Duties in such a manner; or more plainly, for not submitting to those Constitutions established, for the better ordering of those Duties, which Constitutions he proves to be good, from an Enumeration of all the Causes. They are good, *respeñ Efficientis*, sufficient Authority. 2. *Materiæ*, the matter not unlawful, or contrary to a former Obligation. 3. *Formæ*, a sufficient Promulgation. 4. *Finis*, the publick Peace and Safety.

To consider all these things distinctly, Let me say,

1. By necessary Duties, we agree are, meant Duties necessary by the Divine Precept, or as Means to the Ends of Christian Religion.

2. Ministers and People are first obliged to Christ, as their Governour absolute, according to his Laws, and to temporal Governours subordinately, in and for the Lord. Therefore the first and principal Regard of Obedience is to Jesus Christ, with that strictness he hath bound us to.

3. No Action of Religion can be done without Circumstances.

4. Circumstances are subservient to Duties; and we are sure, that God doth not tie up to such Circumstances, as do always tie up from the Duties, tho in some Circumstances the Duty may be omitted; but they are such, as render the Duty for that time unnecessary; and if Men would learn from God, they would never enjoyn such Circumstances, as shall hinder any to perform them, from whom God requires them.

5. Those Circumstances, as you call them, are such as no private Man can take away, because required by Laws. Being such, it shall never be lawful for any *Nonconformist* to preach to more than Four beside the Household, yet they are bound absolutely to Christ, to preach (without any Restriction, if the Bishops please) for else they would be only conditionally bound to Christ, and absolutely bound to the Bishops. If the Bishops allow them, then Christ allows them; if the Bishops forbids them, then Christ forbids them: for all Power derived from Christ, is for Christ. If the *Nonconformists* neglect necessary Duties out of respect to human Circumstances; who do obey? He that requires the Duty *quoad Substantiam*? or them that shut them up, or rather out, *per Circumstantias*; which is best, to neglect the Duties required by Christ, when they cannot without Sin observe the Circumstances; or neglect those Circumstances, and do the Duties in such other Circumstances as they can have? This were to make the Observation of Human Circumstances more necessary than Divine Ordinances.

6. It is in some Circumstances as necessary for a *Nonconformist* to preach without our Circumstances, as it is for us to preach with them.

7. The Case hath been, and may, as it was to *Peter Martyr* before he left *Italy*, to preach, and administer Sacraments, in a Conventicle of many hundreds, or some thousands, and necessary to

Apology for N. C. preaching, to the Bishops, p. 15, 16. §. 12. venture Life and all for it. What R. Mr. B. writes, is to the point of Circumstances, If the Magistrate forbids us to preach the Gospel; either our Preaching is necessary or unnecessary, and this either no-

torious or doubtful. If our Preaching be notoriously unnecessary, we will obey him, and forbear. If it be a doubtful Case, we will use all means God hath appointed us, to know the Truth; and if yet it be doubtful, and our Minds in suspense, we will stand to the Judgment of the Magistrate, and forbear. But if our Ministry be notoriously and undoubtably necessary to the just Ends, which is the Edification of Mens Souls, we will obey God in Preaching, as we are able, and humbly and patiently bear what is laid upon us by our Rulers; nor do we take our selves bound by Christ to one Place, or one Time, or manner of Teaching, or to speak always to a great Assembly; but all these are Circumstances, which we must fit to the end and success of our Work.

To conclude this Head, Altho the *Nonconformists* cannot preach in those Circumstances (as you call them) enjoined by Law, for fear of sinning, as they do confidently and seriously declare, and for no other Reason; they must preach and pray, and perform other Religious Exercises upon such Circumstances as they can have, and that (if it cannot otherwise be) upon hazard: for it is a greater Sin, and deserves a sorer Punishment, to neglect a necessary Duty enjoynd by Christ, than to neglect the Observation of such Circumstances, as are enjoined by (a lawful) Authority; except Jesus Christ hath given such Power to Magistrates and Church-Governours, as to command Circumstances, which all his Servants without dispute, or hesitancy, must obey; and that Christ doth rather approve of the neglect of necessary Duties, than for respect to them, transgress human Circumstances, by which, necessary Duties may be suspended, or rendred unnecessary. If both cannot be done, the one without the other, which must give place? the Circumstances to the necessary Duties? or the Duties to the Circumstances? Especially when we consider that Christian Preachers, and People, are first and absolutely obliged to Jesus Christ, and but subordinately and conditionally to Men in Authority. Notwithstanding the *Nonconformists* non compliance with (what some call) Circumstances in Preaching and Praying, which are necessary Duties, they do well, for they obey the greater.

Now I pass to the *Minor*: But *Nonconformists* suffer for Preaching and Praying.

This is utterly denied, and indeed if this be not denied, the Conclusion would necessarily follow: Therefore they are punished for necessary Duties, and by Consequence for Religion, or doing well.

Now that which is incumbent upon me, is to shew, that indeed they suffer for Religious Exercises; and to prove that, I must consider what is said to the contrary, which I shall do, in the first place:

They are punished, saith he, for not observing Circumstances required, or for not performing them in the manner required, or for not submitting to those Constitutions established, for better Order, &c.

I answer, It is true, they suffer for not submitting to these, but not for that Cause alone, but for Religious Exercises, *ut infra*.

You say, the Constitutions are good, by an Enumeration of Causes. To which I answer; 1. The *Nonconformists* do not deny, but own the Efficient, the Legislative-Power. 2. They refuse and question the matter of many of the Constitutions, and if they scrupled but one, they cannot subscribe to all; and that because unlawful to them. 3. Many suffer for not subscribing, and declaring their Assent to the Common-Prayer, which came not to them before the time was expired for so doing. Here is a defect of a Cause, the formal Cause, the Promulgation of the Constitutions. We that lived nearer *London*, had but a little time to peruse the Liturgy; but many had not time at all, in many places, and they not in the remote Parts. A Divine of Years and Learning, in the Diocese of *Lincoln*, gave this for one Reason. in his Farewel Sermon, that he was to be silenced by Law, for not subscribing and assenting to a Book which he had not seen. It is likely he had other Reasons; but they that suffer for not submitting to what they saw not, do not suffer for doing ill, but well. Lastly, The Constitutions are for publick Peace and Safety; but except the matter be of that Tendency, many Constitutions may be good in respect of the Efficient, Formal, and Final; but may be ill in respect of the Matter. And the Controversy of the *Nonconformists* is about the matter of the Constitutions chiefly. And if their Preaching and Praying give no Disturbance, but to some Minds, easily stirred, and tend to Godliness and Honesty, then they are so far good, and agree with the design of the Constitutions. They suffer, as appears, for an Omission, not obeying the

And it was the case of many more in that Diocese. And Mr. E. of W. in the County of L. was ejected by Sir Edward Lake, altho he gave that Reason, that the Book was not brought him before the 24th of Aug. nor before he was declared deprived by the Commissary.

Constitutions, and them chiefly, in one Cause, and but perhaps in some one part of them: See then what the principal Cause of their many Sufferings is; they are such things as are, as we say, things indifferent, but necessary in Practice by human Laws; which compared with the necessary Duties of Religion, which are enjoined by Christ, and the Laws of the Land, are but small and unnecessary; yet not obeying these Constitutions which bind not immediately by a Divine Precept, shall render able Ministers unserviceable; yea it shall be a sinful Act in them, to do necessary Duties, acknowledged by all Christians to be such, for not observing them. Having laid these things open, I proceed to prove that the *Nonconformists* suffer for Religious, Christian Exercises.

1. The Law-makers, in their Laws, never noted them for other, than for Religious Exercises, and for good Duties; therefore we must take them for good, not only by the Law of Christ, but by our Temporal Laws. All the Ministers of *England* and *Wales*, that were ejected for not subscribing, &c. were supposed good, if they had subscribed; and when they were ejected, they were not degraded from their Ministry, nor was their After-preaching, prejudged to be as no Preaching and Praying. The same Act might have declared their Religious Exercises to be null, and them no Ministers; they were removed from their Stations, and deprived of Tithes and Profits, but their After-performances lost not their internal Nature, altho they should be performed without Common-Prayer, Rites and Ceremonies.

2. The Subsequent Acts do not absolutely forbid their Religious Exercises, as Evil, or Evil-doing, but as deficient in the external Form, and as abused by ill Men and Hypocrites, to move to Rebellion and Insurrection, endanger Church and State, and to such a Number of People, and if they were such, they would be materially Evil, and then cease to be Religious Exercises.

3. So then their Fault lies in Deficiency of things concomitant, which doth not so affect them, as to change them from Good to Evil; they may be acceptable with God, and profitable to Men for all that, so far as they celebrate Religious Exercises, to pious Ends, they materially and finally do the things that are pleasing to God, and do well, even Men being Judges.

4. They do not suffer Fines and Imprisonments for not subscribing de-
claring according to the Act of Uniformity alone, they suffered for that before: They do not suffer for moving Seditions, or Insurrections, whereof none hath been so much as charged, much less found guilty. They do therefore suffer for performing Religious Exercises.

1. So the Witnesses or Informers testify, and not for moving Insurrections.

2. So the Warrants should run against them; therefore for doing well, and for Religious Exercises.

3. If not for Religious Exercises, how come the Preachers to be fined 20 l. or others for them, not for beating Drums, or for bearing Arms, I suppose?

Obj. But the Law prohibits all Religious Duties and to above Four and the Household, which are not legitimated by the Common-Prayer.

Ans. It is true, but then let us observe, That the meer absence of the Common-Prayer, and Ceremonies, doth not change them; they are Christian, Religious Duties, notwithstanding that defect; for it could not be supposed that near 2000 Ministers, dedicated to God, would cast off Religious Exercises, when cast out of their Places, or that they would use those things, to which they refused to subscribe; and tho they could not imagine that, they denied not Preaching and Praying without a Form, and Ceremonies, to be Religious Duties.

2. Some of the Duties which they perform, are after the manner of the Church of England; such is their reading of the Scriptures, singing of Psalms, and Preaching, we being at liberty as to Text, Words, Method; and their praying before, and after Sermon; we are not tied to the very Words and Syllables in Canon LV, but to those Words, or to that Effect, To move our Congregations to pray. Now if they read, sing, pray, preach, ~~we~~ we do, they suffer for those Religious Exercises; therefore for Religion, and Well-doing; but supposing them imperfect for want of the Common-Prayer, yet so far as they are religious, they are good.

Obj. But they are looked upon as suspicious Persons, because they subscribed not, &c. to the Act of Uniformity in the *Oxford Act*.

Ans. True, but two things are considerable.

1. Many took off that Suspicion, by subscribing that Declaration; yet that will not excuse them, if they preach to above Four.

2. Their not subscribing, and declaring according to the Act of Uniformity, makes the cause of their Suffering doubtful. The Law calls them to conform upon such Conditions, of subscribing and declaring. Their Consciences, after the most diligent search into all things required, command them, upon peril of sinning against God, to forbear. They may be deceived, and why may not fallible Imposers be deceived (say they). If they suffer for not sinning against God, and Conscience? If they suffer for performing Religious Exercises, according to the general Rules of the Gospel, and their own Consciences, as well informed as they can inform themselves, they suffer for Religion, altho they that exact and execute

Punishments, think they suffer for Omissions, and Obstinacies in those Omissions. They suffer for Omission of humane Constitutions, which they hold not Divine, and perform Duties, which they hold to be Divine. The case is as clear to them to be unlawful, as it is clear to them that command them, to be lawful, therefore the Case hangs in doubt. If they that refuse to conform, refuse upon peril of temporal Losses, they who inflict them, do inflict them upon peril of sinning also. He that suffers, for doing what is confessedly Religious, and forbears what is dubious, or sinful in appearance, is on the safer side, than he that punisheth for undoubted, religious, necessary Duties, only for the Omission of unnecessary things.

Obj. But holding their Meetings to above Four, and in publick, is seditious in the eye of the Law, and they suffer for that, and not for their Religion.

Ans. Indeed that seems to be the only criminal Circumstance. But why shall this alter the Case? which is far better, and more satisfactory to Magistrates and the Church, than their retiring into allowed private Houses, and the stinted Number. But this doth not make Religious Exercises, to be no Religious Exercises, except it infuse poisonous Principles into a Multitude, which is not known, and cannot be proved; it is Religion and not a Riot, that is really punished. Now granting this to be a forbidden Circumstance; compare it with the many Circumstances, that make it the more allowable, and then, shall Religious Exercises, necessary to be observed, profitable to many, be therefore unpardonable, because of one Circumstance? This I humbly refer to Consideration, before the Magistrate strike with the heavy hand of the Law. Make the most that can be of the Fact: Here's Religious Service, performed without Ceremony, and Form, (there's the defect) here's a Religious Exercise, to a supernumerary Company, that's the excess. But to this let us compare the nature of the Exercises, unquestionably Divine. The Institutor is Christ our Lord; the Ordinances are necessary, the manner of Performance, according to the general Rules of Christ, highly beneficial, and tending to publick Good, and eternal Life; yet for the want of a Circumstance or two, (made necessary by a mutable Law) the Observers of them shall be punished as Evil doers.

Are not Humane Constitutions subject to the Providences of God, the Supream Governour, whose Dominion is especially, to be owned in all Christian Kingdoms? Suppose then, by the over ruling Providences of God, there are Alterations made in the Affairs of the Kingdom, which make that which is a Divine Ordinance, become a necessary Duty to Men prohibited by temporal Laws, whether Governours of Christian States should not observe them, and make their Laws stoop to the Divine Will?

The Defenders of the Church argue, It is more reasonable the *Dissenters* should yield to the Bishops, than the Bishops to them; so say I, It is more reasonable and decent, that Humane Laws should yield to the Divine Pleasure, than the Work of God be stop'd by Humane Laws.

The true State of this, as far as I can perceive, lies before us thus: First, The preaching of the Gospel, is an indispensable good Duty. Secondly, They who are fitted, called, and devoted to God, are bound to preach it. Thirdly, Some that are happily fitted for it, become suspicious to some in Power. Fourthly, By long Experience and Process of time, they cannot be charged with such Crimes, as are of ill Operation to the State. Fifthly, These Men are ready to give such security to the State, as the Generality of unquestionable Subjects give, and to take away all just cause of Jealousy and Mistrust. Sixthly, They are qualified by Christ, and must give an account to him; they are called and invited to discharge their Duties as Preachers. 1. Their Conscience puts them in mind of their Vows, as Persons devoted to Christ to serve him upon his Conditions. 2. The cry of Souls calls them, that either want, or want such as can and will do them good; this is the plain case in multitudes of Places. 3. God unexpectedly opens a door for them by Fire and Plague, and other providences. 4. Calm Proceedings of Magistrates, and the Inclination of Law-givers give them Encouragement. 5. Their Zeal for God answers this Call. 6. God gives them his Blessing, followeth them with success, which is a sign of his Approbation, which he never gave to Evil-doing. And shall this be punished by Christians as Evil-doing! This is to act contrary to God; to punish them, whom God approves! — There is a Humane Law, stands in their way, revoked *in Voto*, by them that made it; shall the observance of that Law, suspend the Administration of Ordinances in themselves good, well performed in the general manner, where there is great need; and to good Ends without dangerous Effects, or Consequences to them, that once did forbid them?

Preaching and Praying are good Duties; but the *Nonconformists* Preaching and Praying, tho' good in Substance, is not good because of ill Circumstances, say some. Now then the Opposition here, is not between their Preaching and Praying, and ours, but between their Circumstances and ours; we according to Legal Constitutions, they not according to them. But, as hath been argued, there is but one Circumstance that is faulty, (the want of Common-Prayer and Ceremonies, makes not their Preaching faulty; for the Law that enjoyned them, did not brand their Preaching and Praying without them, as Evil-doing) the Evil attending their Preaching, are the ill Designs and Ends which they never drove at; it is good if free from them; it is ill it seems, because to too many Hearers.

Here's one Circumstance, or want of one Condition ! To this one oppose all the Circumstances (if you call them so) and they are more, and greater for them, than this one against them.

There is no such Preaching and Praying, and performing good Duties, as is absolutely perfect, and free from all Faults; and often-times in necessary Ingredients, and Conditions, the best Man faileth. This supposed, the Question arising is, Whether they who observing the Call of God, Answer of their Conscience, need and benefit of Souls, are blessed of God in their Work (tho but in some measure) do not do better, to preach and pray at all hazards, if otherwise it cannot be, than if they did forbear ? (because in one point they offend against a revokable Law) and for that, how many Circumstances do over-match that one ? First, For their Persons, they are else in all points subject to the Laws. Secondly, For their Doctrine, ready to give an account. Thirdly, For the manner of doing, it is in a peaceable way, without any kind of Riot ; they meet and part as peaceably, as any of our Church-Assemblies do.

There is, I say again, no such performance of Duties, as is absolute faultless, and perfect in all Circumstances. The Duties they perform are religious, defective only in outward Form ; and is it not comparatively better to perform them, than forbear them ? And can he, that punisheth them for such Religious Exercises (neither materially poisonous, nor effectually poisoning Subjects) ever be excused from punishing Well-doing, and for Religion, if these Considerations have any Reason in them ?

Obj. It is not Religion, but their Nonconformity to the Laws, that's punished.

Ans. Their Nonconformity was punished once before, by their loss of their Livings, and temporal undoing ; how often must the same Men be punished for the same Fault, as you, and not they, account it ?

Obj. They are Men of ill Designs, &c.

Ans. Why do not you prosecute them, as such, if they are such, and leave out their Preaching and Praying out of your Informations and Warrants ?

Obj. If the Execution of Laws, shall be termed Persecution ; then wo to Magistrates, will any Man dare to call it Persecution ? This is the case, &c.

Ans. All due Reverence to the Laws, and to the Magistrates premised ; the Administrators of Laws, may be guilty of undue Prosecutions, and persecuting Men with good Laws. Merciless and uncharitable urging of good Laws beyond their intention and scope, and with Revenge and Rigor

Rigor upon the Peccant, is Persecution in the common Acceptation of Men.

To conclude this Disquisition, It is undeniable that nothing but Preaching and Praying, and other Religious Exercises, are the Cause of Trouble and Sufferings to very many, who had not been at all molested, but for those Duties. If there be a house full of Friends, or Strangers, that come and go in a peaceable manner; yea altho many or all of the Men are armed with ordinary Weapons, if there be nothing but eating and drinking, and common Discourses, they are not molested; yea, if a great deal of their Discourse be religious, there is no Information, nor issuing out of Warrants; but if there be a Preacher among them, and any Solemnity in the Duties of Religion, this becomes offensive, and liable to the Laws. It is the Exercise of Religion that gives the Offence, and makes the Company guilty; and how Punishments fall upon such, when met without Weapons, or quarrelling, or disturbance of the Peace, to make it a Riot, but for Religion, is not to be thought. There is no Question to be made, but many Justices have been guilty of gross Persecution, abusing the Laws to the service of their Anger and Revenge, and have gone beyond the Law, when they have wanted sufficient Evidence, either of Preaching, Praying, or Expounding, or of any Preacher being in Company; but have told the Informers, if they heard but a Tone like Preaching, it was sufficient. It can be proved of one Justice, that without any other Proof, sent out his Warrant to levy upon the Goods of them that were present; and I have seen a Copy of another Warrant, for levying of 20 *l.* when it was not proved, that there was a Preacher in the House. If these are true, then such Executioners of Justice, do execute for Religion, and for no other Offence. Such also as threaten they will not leave a Meeting-house standing, who know both the Preachers and their Auditors, to be peaceable Persons, and cannot pretend any cause of Fear From their Assemblies, do threaten, as displeased with their Religious Exercises, and for no other Cause; for, if they can suffer many lazy irreligious Persons to absent from Church, and not punish them, tho they have no lawful cause of their Absence, and threaten to punish them that are religious, but in another way, it is not Conscience and Zeal of Duty to the publick Worship, that moves them; for then they would punish the lazy and idle, or prophane, and say, They will not suffer any Person to be absent from the Common-Prayer, but be zealous against some, as against others.

But this is not the Temper of all, therefore I will not bring in a charge of Persecution against all, but I will endeavour to shew what is required of a Man, that cannot be said to persecute, and leave it to the Examination and sentence of every Mans Conscience.

1. He must be a knowing Man, not in Christian Religion in general only, but in these controverted points about Religion; he must not be so senseless, as to call Religion, Sedition, nor to make a different Form to be a different Religion, or that Religion is subverted by a Difference from some humane Constitutions. He must be a knowing Man, lest he rush ignorantly upon the Servants of Christ. *Paul* was a Persecuter, when he was ignorant; Ignorance did excuse him from the Malice, but not from the Persecution. He must not only [think] he doth God good Service, for so did others, who for all their thought did persecute the Disciples, but be [sure] he doth God good Service.

2. He must be a sincere Lover of Jesus Christ, of his Holy Ordinances, of all that believe on him, and that worship him; for if he hate Christ, hate his Gospel, Preaching, Praying, and Religious Duties, or hate the Disciples of Christ, he must needs be a Persecutor, and of the grosser sort.

3. He must be sincere in what he doth, for the thing which he doth, he must be satisfied that he doth well, and he must intend the Glory of God, and the honour and preservation of Religion in it. If he pretend in his Warrants, Sedition, or evil Designs, when there is none, he acts falsely, and pretends that to be the cause of his Commands, which he verily knows is not the cause, as not being as much as alledged or proved. If he thus proceeds, he strikes at Religion, under pretence of Sedition and Rebellion.

4. He must consider the Circumstances of the Persons, both Preachers and Hearers, the time of their Meeting, the need they have in their Places, and other Circumstances. But if, without Examination, or making any difference for his Information, he follows the story of the Informer, then proceeds to the Punishments, and that perhaps for doing the best Duties, and some of the best Works they can do, then he punisheth Men for well-doing.

5. He must be a merciful Man, not stretching the Law, as far as he can in severity, to oppress or break the Persons; for certainly it is not the end of the Law to ruine the Subject, but to preserve him, as much as may be. They that proceed to the rigor of the Law, have a spight at the Persons; and let their love to Religion be, as they think, sound; yet they persecute the Person. How such can excuse themselves, is unknown to me, that if the Preacher be gone, or be so poor, (as it hath often been found) then to multiply Sums, 20 *l.* for the House, 20 *l.* for every poor Preacher, 5 *s.* for hearing, upon the Master of the House, for bearing, besides the 20 *l.* for his House, 5 *s.* for the Wife, 5 *s.* for every Child, and so on: or else to lay as heavy a Sum upon a poorer Man, as upon the richer, is unequal and unmerciful; and if Justices are not merciful, they have the

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Countenance of the Law, for Unmercifulness, and Revenge upon whom they please. Certainly that Man is unmerciful, who would seize upon a Bed of a poor, aged Widow for a Debt, or Rent; but whether it be merciful to do so, as it is said, it hath been somewhere so done, for being at a Conventicle, let Christians judg.

6. He must beware, lest by his Justice, he doth put a stop to the Gospel, and hinder the growth and exercise of true Piety; for if he hinder the Gospel, he doth not the part of a Friend and Servant of Christ. If by the suppression of Conventicles, the serious prosecution and exercise of Religion be discouraged, he doth evil, by his doing good, if he doth good by executing his Office; yet if the Execution of his Office, be to the hurt and decay of Religion, he doth ill by doing well, and doth, as a Friend, the real, if not the intentional part of an Enemy.

7. He must really be perswaded in his Conscience, that all ways of Worship, not contrary to, but different in Form and Ceremony from the Church of *England*, is meritorious of personal Ruine, and the Ruine of Children in their Parents (for it will quickly rise to that) that it is Evil-doing, that it deserves greater punishments, than common Swearing, or riding Journeys on the Lord's Day; that he must be sure, that he intends no hurt or disadvantage to serious Piety, that he loves the Persons of the *Dissenters*, as he doth other Men, wilheth no ill to any of them, and that judging their Practises to be Evil-doing; that he punisheth them meerly, and only for Evil-doing, without respect to Anger, private Displeasure, or secret Gain, either by Bribes, or Rewards, either of Favour, Honour, or Estimation, or saving of himself. He that punisheth rightly, must sincerely bend himself against Evil-doing, as Evil-doing, for the good of the Person; or if not, for the Benefit of that Person that suffereth for the good of others. If you can chastise the Religious for Religious Exercises, and save Religion harmless, you have divided the finest Hair that ever was seen. Nonconformity implies Conscience (or else it is flat irrational Madnes, to suffer for a whimsy or humor) and to punish them for Religious Duties, and not for Religion and Conscience, is too Metaphysical a Notion, to be brought to Practise.

I have now opened the Case, let others judge whether it be not Persecution: It hurts the Sufferer, it molests and vexeth him, his Vexation is for Religious Exercises, materially good, finally good; effectually good to many, without harm to any, faulty in an outward Form, or Circumstance, which may be born with, without danger to the Kingdoms Peace, or to true Religion. If this should prove to be a Persecution in any Magistrate, or other, then it follows,

Fourthly, Be perswaded from this Course of proceeding, and wait for healing Applications and Remedies; for it is one of the most unkind, unnatural Prosecutions, that have been ever carried on. The Persons are our peaceable and loyal Fellow-Subjects, useful in the Common-wealth, make up our strength against our common Enemies; they are related to us in the Flesh, baptized with the same Baptism, believe in the same God, and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with one Faith, and that have offered to unite with us, in the same Form of Government, and of Prayer, as far as they could, without danger of sinning; we are not under the Temptation of complying with an Heterodox Prince, against the Orthodox Christians; our King professeth the same Faith. It was an unhappiness to the Church, when an *Arian* Emperour, or Empress, drew the Flatterers, and timorous Bishops, to persecute the Orthodox. This is not our case, the Controversy now, is not between the Heretick and the Orthodox, we do not in them prosecute the *Arrian*, *Nestorian*, *Eutichian*, or *Donatist*. Nor doth the *Papist* persecute the *Protestant*, but the *Protestant* disobeys the *Protestant*, and the *Protestant* doth afflict, if not persecute, the *Protestant*, which is a doleful Consideration! Oh! how bitter is it! if there can be no difference found in Religion, there shall be a difference made by some Acts of Policy; if none in Articles of Faith, there shall be in Conditions of Communion and Ceremony. Here the professed sincere *Protestant* takes up a Complaint against them, who are as sincere as he. The Orthodox did communicate with the Heterodox, yea with the Heretick; the Heretick broke off first, and begun the Persecution, and followed it: But the Orthodox, when he had Favour and Power for him, did not revenge. Let Heresy, which is from the Flesh and the Devil, be propagated, and enforced by carnal and diabolical Weapons; but let Truth which is from God, be carried on with Love. Truth goes forth with Evidence and Conviction like the Sun; but Heresy comes into the World sometimes with Silence, but is carried about in a Storm, attended with Lightnings. Who but an *Ismael* will persecute an *Isaac*? If the *Papists* will persecute, who are by another Mother, a second *Hagar*, which gendeth to Bondage, and scares us with Thundrings and Excommunications, as from Mount *Sinai*, or *Ebal*; let Peace be in the Walls of *Jerusalem*. If *Papists* persecute *Protestants*, O let not *Protestants* persecute *Protestants*! To open this that I may move both Reason and Compassion, I will consider, *Who punisheth, who are punished, and for what, and see where we can find the like*; and whether *Hereticks* and *Papists*, and the immoderate *Lutherans* are not justified by us, in the Cruelties which they have exercised.

I. The Magistrate is professedly a sincere *Protestant*, or else he must be an abominable perfidious Hypocrite, because of his Oaths, and Renunciation of the Pope and Popery.

2. They

2. They who are punished, are as Orthodox holy Christians as any in the World, out of our own Church. They are profitable and peaceable Subjects, notwithstanding many discouragements and provocations from fellow-subjects, and hidden Traitors.

More particularly, many of them have deserved well from the Church and State; which in humane Probability had never been restored, but for their Loyalty, Religion, and Conscience. This made the most Renowned Sir *Matthew Hale*, say (whose sense may be as soon taken as most Men's alive, for his Wisdom, Loyalty, Integrity, and Impartiality in all Acts of Judgment) ‘ Many of the *Nonconformists* had merited highly in the business of the King's Restauration, and at least deserved, that the Terms of Conformity should not be made stricter than they were before the War. Yea, to

Dr. Burnet's Life of Sir M. Hale, p. 65, 66. large Octavo.

advance as high as I can, in an unquestionable Authority: His Majesty in his Gracious Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, said, (*pag. 5.*) ‘ That while he was in *Holland* he was attended by many Grave and Learned Ministers from hence who were looked upon as the most able and principal Assertors of the *Presbyterian* Opinions — and to Our great Satisfaction and Comfort, found them Persons full of Affection to Us, of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, and neither Enemies to Episcopacy or Liturgy, but modestly to desire such Alterations in either, as without shaking Foundations, might best allay present Distempers.

And in his Gracious Speech to the Lords, (*July 27. 1660*) to hasten the passing the Act of *Oblivion*: ‘ My Lords, if you do not joyn with Me in extinguishing this Fear, which keeps the hearts of Men apprehensive of Safety and Security, You keep Me from performing My Promise, which if I had not made, I am perswaded neither You nor I had been now here. I pray let Us not deceive those who Brought, or Permitted Us to come together.

The greatest Charge against them, is, That they are *Separatists* and *Schismatics*. Besides, that this remains in debate between the Accusers and Accused. Suppose them to be so, Yet 1. The very *Independents*, I mean the chief of them, besides what they have declared in the above quoted Declaration of their Faith at the *Savoy*, to be neither *Brownists* nor *Donatists*. Besides many Passages in *Dr. Owen's* Books, Mr. Nye hath declared himself, as to our National and Parochial Ministry, and hearing us preach; and *Dr. Good*. lays down the Opinions of *Brown* and *Donatist*, and saith. *And against these, I for my part, and many of my Brethren, profess that they are in an Error, &c.*

Case of great and present use, Lond. 1677. 35th Sermon on the Ephelians, p. 477 fol.

The Turbulency of *Brown's* own Spirit ran him into many Oppositions and Troubles ; but he, the greatest *Schismatick* of those days, enjoyed his good Parsonage while he lived. The first Emperor that made Laws against the *Donatists*, was *Theodosius*, but they were not punished for their Schism (the greatest in the World) as such ; but the occasion of the Penal

Augustin Bönifacio
Ep l. 2. Epist. 50.

Laws against them, was their barbarous abuse and beating of Bishop *Maximinian*, almost to Death, tearing of his Altar, &c. and other insufferable Violences and Furies. The Riots and Murders committed by them, and the *Circumcellions* (the same Faction) was the cause of Severity against them. But how far are our *Nonconformists* from breaking Peace, offering Violence, or any rude Incivilities, by Word or Deed, is apparent to all that are not given to wrong them, or to take pardonable things too ill from them.

Lastly, The Causes of their Sufferings have been spoken of before, to be neither Heresy, Sedition, nor Rebellion. The very Light of Nature seems to abhor punishing the Religious and Just ; therefore the Heathen Persecutors have falsely imputed horrid Crimes, to holy Christians, from which they are clearly vindicated in the Apologies of the Fathers. The *Arrians* were Calumniators of the Orthodox, and so are the *Papists*, and unpeaceable *Lutherans* ; But we that live together, should know one another better, and be both just and modest. The *Papists* damn us as Hereticks, therefore curse and persecute ; the immoderate *Lutherans* charge the *Calvinists* with the denial of Gods Omnipotency, Communication of Properties, and many other Heresies, and Blasphemies : But what Heresy can we charge upon the *Nonconformists* ? Had Antiquity left us such Confessions, and Explications of Faith, such Treatises in Divinity, Expositions of Scripture, Defences of Religion, we should have honoured them as much as now many dispise them ; they are full and firm in their learned and rational Opposition to Popery, in all the parts of it. And let us observe how we reckon some, in former Ages, as ours, who came short of them, and yet we must eject them, and multiply Sufferings upon them, *as none of ours* ; we reckon *John Wickliff*, *Jerom of Prague*, *Huss*, and those plain and heroick Confessors, the *Waldenses*, and *Albigenses*, *Bohemians*, &c. ours ; they are in our Martyrologies, and among our Witnesses for the Truth, in the dark times, when nothing was almost visible but Popery. Shall we account them Martyrs, when the *Papists* had more colour for their Persecutions, and bloody Usages of them, considering the Principles of the *Papists*, and the Opposition of those Martyrs ; than we have for loading our Brethren with Punishment upon Punishment, considering the Principles of our Religion, and the Quality of the *Nonconformists*, both as to Religion, yea

and

and as to the Separation it self. For surely the Separation of those Worthies from *Rome*, as *Babylon*, and the seat of Antichrist, and a mortally infected Church, was a greater provocation of the *Roman* Powers against them, than a peaceable dissent from a Church, acknowledged truly Christian, only for some scrupled unnecessary things; indifferent we say, therefore may be spared; sinful say they, therefore cannot be assented to; and some private Doctrines besides, &c. That which comes nearest our unhappy Case, is the *Interim*, that Book that was urged by *Charles* the V, upon the reformed Churches in *Germany*, requiring the Observation of Popish Ceremonies, as indifferent things, for a time, until a General Council should be called: What Divisions did it cause among the Princes and their Divines? among the Divines differing one from another? What woful Dispersions and Miseries attended the refusal of it, are at large related by *Sleidan*, in his *Commentaries*. This Book *Sleidan*, p. 20, 21. contained Popish Doctrines, which the *Protestants* rejected; but the things that divided them, were the *Adiaphora*, or *media*, Ceremonies, and indifferent things, which many refused, and suffered to very great Extremities. But he who terrified them and persecuted them, was a great Emperor, and a *Papist*; and the Arguments used against it, were, because it was not consonant to Scriptures, and went against their Conscience, and Light received. After this, the Adversary, the Devil, stirred up another Controversy, attended with a dreadful Division, and Persecution, to the desolation of Churches and Schools. *John Brentius* invented the notion of Ubiquity of Christ's Body, and propagated it, by (the Apostle of Ubiquity) *Jacobus Andreas*, but they gave it a pompous Title, of the Majestick Communication of the Divinity, and Divine Properties; being fond of the Notion, and impatient of Contradiction. *Andreas*, assisted by some that were near *Augustus* Elector of *Saxony*, irritate *Anne* his Dutcheß, perswade the Elector that his Physician *Gasper Peucer*, and others were entred into a Conspiracy against him, upon which they are cast into Prison, and endure extraordinary hardship, as *Gasper Peucer* shews at large, in the History *Hist. Carcerum*. of his ten Years Imprisonment. Here two things were principally objected, false Doctrine, (*Calvinism*) concerning the Sacrament; and Conspiracies, and Seditions to maintain it. But what colour was there for the last? what Reason for it? These were the common Causes of Persecution; Pride, impatience of Opposition, false Witness, Jealousy and Wrath. But yet our Theological Controversies at home, are not of that nature; and the matters in Debate are *Questiones Medicabiles*, as some of the Ancients speak; and yet behold Division and Strife! And considering how irreconcilable the rigid *Lutherans* are to the moderate

Disciples of *Melancthon*, which are noted with the odious Name of *Calvinistical*: And how intirely our *Nonconformists* agree with the Articles of the Church; their Sufferings are more to be wondred at, from Orthodox Protestants, than the other from violent *Lutherans*. There was a third Party that made the difference, and the Advantage of the Miseries of them that suffered; and so there is a third Party among us, not unknown to us. But why, 1. Divisions should be made that need not. 2. Why continued; and, 3. Why the weaker Part should be severely used, is a greater wonder. It is a clear Indication, that they who are for a Prosecution, are not for a Reconciliation. Striking is not the way to heal our Bruises; It was a great fault in the *Corinthians*, to go Law, Brother with Brother; nay, you do wrong and defraud, and that your Brethren, 1 *Cor.* 6. Are there not those Saints in *England*, that shall judg the World, and Judg Angels? And are there not such to be found, as will judg in this most unhappy Controversy, and bring it to an Accommodation, if not to an End, that there may be nothing like a Persecution in the Church of *England*?

Obj. But say some of us, Why will the *Nonconformists* divide from us? why will they not unite and submit?

Ans. You may as well demand, why will they not part with their Reason, and their Conscience; for these are the things they follow, as they confidently affirm; and for which they have forsaken great things, and seem ready to forsake all, that is dear to Men.

Obj. Shall the Church yield to Schismatics, and break her Orders for the sake of Schismatics!

Ans. My Business is not to dictate to the Church; altho it is plain, the Church may be a glorious and perfect Church, and condescend to much, that is not so much as an integral part, nor so necessary to it as a shadow to the Body. 2. But suppose them to be Schismatics, the Question is, What's to be done with them? Are they to be dealt with by rational Means or Violent? I am not satisfied, that this which we call Schism, is so gross and dangerous as that at *Corinth*. It was a great one, that came to this; Is Christ divided? or was *Paul* crucified for you? or were you baptized in the Name of *Paul*? But what course did the Apo-

See 1 *Cor.* 1, 2, 3. *ch.* file take to heal it? He had a Power which was answerable to the temporal Sword. I find he used none, but Instruction, Perswasion, and Reprehension. Are ye not carnal? If any shall maintain Schisms, and Contentions, by Violence, as the *Donatists* did, then subdue them by Power.

Obj. But doth not the Apostle say, *I would they were cut off that trouble you?* Gal. 5. 12.

Ans.

Ans. 1. It is clear, that they who troubled the *Galatians*, were the Ceremonialists, that preached Circumcision, contrary to the Liberty to which the Christians were called. 2. This cutting off, was not by the Magistrate's Sword, nor was it intended it should ever mean him, in the after-times, when Magistrates should be Christians; it was the Apostle's zealous Wish, alluding to their Circumcision, and amounts to that, *Ch. 1. 8. Let him be accursed, &c.* They falsely reported that *Paul* preached Circumcision, which he was so far from doing, that he looks upon them as Disturbers of the Peace of the *Galatians*, and Settlement in the Faith, and wisheth them worse than Circumcision, even Amputation. *Musculus* speaks the clearest of any Man I know, to the Words. 1. Saith he, These false Apostles did so insinuate and cleave to the Church, *perinde atq; pectis Corpori*, there was no avoiding of them. 2. They were the Apostles of Satan, Wolves in the Flock, and a Pestilence in the Body of the Church, and were not of the number of the Faithful. 3. From what doth he wish them cut off? even from the Body of the Churches of Christ. 4. *He wishes they were cut off.* Let us be admonished by this Example, that many things fall out, or happen in the Church, which are rather to be cut off by the Wishes of the Minister, than by Fact; he may wish what he cannot actually do. This Text is not applicable to our Brethren, and yet inconsiderate Zeal doth wound them with it. Indeed the same good Expositor doth with the Magistrate would take away in his time, those false Teachers and Pastors, which endangered the Salvation of Believers.

Obj. But who have preached and written more against Toleration than they who now plead for it? Why should they have what they would not grant, when they would have got the Power to themselves in their way?

Ans. This Argument carries more Prejudice than Strength in it, and doth rather throw them off like self-contradicting, troublesome Men, than really convince them. And I might answer for them in this one Sentence, That they who were against the Toleration of the pernicious and intolerable, were never for the Suppression of such as themselves, who were both sound and tolerable.

2. Neither is there any thing extracted out of the Sermons preached before the long Parliament, or other Treatises, that doth prejudice their Claim to what they ask.

1. They do assert the Magistrates Power in matters of Religion in particular, to keep Men from infecting their Subjects with foul destroying Errors; Blasphemous, Heretical, Idolatrical Opinions. The complaint of Dr. *Burgefs*, is against *Putredinous*

See Mr. Calam. Ser.
Decemb. 25th, 1644.
Ser. Nov. 5. 1641.

Vermine of bold Schismatics, frantick Sectaries,-- to mount our Pulpits, to offer strange Fire, to expel the ablest Ministers in the Kingdom out of the Hearts of their People, as *Formalists*, Time-servers, no Ministers of Christ, Limbs of Antichrist, having no calling but from the Devil, that forsake our Assemblies as Babylonish and Antichristian. — Take heed of those Spirits of Error, of Indulgence to all sorts of Sects be Schisms, that plead it is the Peoples Liberty to be of what Religion they will, and their Opinions never so erroneous and pernicious. —

Id. Serm. Apr. 1645. Mr. *John Ward* of *Ipswich*, did exhort the Parliament to take care of the just Liberties of God's People, not such Licentiousness, as is abus'd for a Cloak of Naughtiness, &c. to set up Unity in Faith, that God's Name be not blasphemed, his Day be sanctified, his Gospel preached, his Worship kept from Idolatry, and Superstitions Innovations, his Ministry purged, planted, encouraged, Sacraments purely celebrated. It is more than necessary, and would take up too much time and place to examine all. That which they were against, was a general Toleration of all Religions of Idolatry, Heresy, Blasphemy, and for all Men to do what they pleased: They were against Mens publishing by preaching or printing, dangerous Opinions, such as *Poligamy*, Arbitrary

Mr. Case's Sermon
May 26th, 1647.

Serm. Feb. 8th, 1646.

Divorce, Mortality of the Soul, no Ministry, no Churches, no Ordinances, no Scriptures denying; the Divinity of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and other Opinions destructive of the Souls of Men. Mr. *Newcomen* is most full in stating the case of Liberty: 'Which (saith he) is not to be granted in such things, as are injurious to God, and destructive of the Souls of Men, nor wherein the difference of Judgment, will necessarily and unavoidably, *ex natura rei*, produce a Rent or Schism. If a Liberty of Judgment be left, it is, first, in such things as are not positively laid down in Scripture, therefore not in Fundamentals of Faith and Worship. 2. In things of private Practise: Care is to be had of keeping those Opinions to our selves, not perplexing the Consciences of others with them. Private Persons of a differing Judgment if they live quietly, frequent the publick Assemblies of Worship, and are not discerned to disturb the Peace either of Church or State, by any secret underminings, are to be tolerated in hope of their Conversion, and for publick Peace sake. Much hath been yielded, yea almost any thing but that one thing, that would lay a Foundation of perpetual Division, and Disunion in Families, Church, and Kingdom: Thus he. And what is there in all this, that hath Conviction, or any Reason to silence them, that they cannot open their Mouths for a Connivance to themselves?

Yea,

Yea, I humbly conceive, there is nothing but what commends the Ministers of the like Perswasion, to publick Favour, as being Orthodox, and sound Men, fit for a greater Favour, than a bare Permission or Toleration.

Obj. The *Presbyterians* were against the Toleration of Independency, therefore it is unreasonable for them to ask, and as unfit for the Church to grant the same to them; the Consequences of which Concession, if made to them, will be as prejudicial to the Church and State, as Independency would have been to them.

Letter of Presbyterian Ministers of Lond. to the Assemblies of Divines against Toleration, Dec. 18th, 1645.

Ans. 1. There hath been no such thing desired, since the King's Return (that I know of) as a Toleration of the *Presbyterian* Government. 2. One great Reason against the Toleration, was, because the *Independents* had not declared what they held, nor circumscribed the Persons, and the things, which they desired. 3. How far the Assembly and the *Presbyterians* condescended; and indeed how amicably both Parties debated the Controversy, is to be seen in the Papers of Accommodation; there was a Committee appointed for Accommodation, November 6th, 1645. After the Paper of the Dissenting Brethren, in Answer to the Committee of Divines, December 23d, 1645, 'It is resolved upon the Question, That they which agree in the Substance of the Worship of God in the Directory, according to the Preface, and agree in the Confession of Faith, and with the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, contained in their Confessions and Writings, as we do, who differ from our Brethren in matters of Discipline, shall have the benefit of this Indulgence. P. 42. This I historically relate, to shew, tho the *Presbyterians* of Lond. were against a Toleration of they knew not what, yet the Assembly took pains by way of Accommodation, till they were diverted from all Proceedings. And now, if they had Power to assign it, the *Congregational* should have a Brotherly Indulgence, that are found in Faith, &c.

Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren, &c. London, 1648.

Obj. But the *Dissenters* are under the ill Eye of the Law, and no more innocent than the *Papists* in the Eye of the Law, and there is fear of them; so the *Fol.* Pamphlet of Rebellion, printed by B. Took.

Ans. I say the *Protestant-Dissenters* are not under the evil Eye of the Law, altho under the ill Opinion of some that wish them executed. If they sowed Seditious Principles, moved Insurrections, or poisoned the King's Subjects, they were most deservedly under the angry Brows of just Laws.

2. What if they were, what then? Those over-voting Numbers in that House of Commons, are under the ill Opinion of the Land, have been noted by that very Parliament, and since.

3. That very Parliament in 1672, and all our Parliaments since, have entertained better Thoughts of them.

4. The King hath deserved some more Respect and Reverence from them that seem to exceed in Loyalty, than to have his Desires in his Speech at the passing the Act of Oblivion, disregarded as it is; and he expressed himself more graciously of them, in many Passages of his Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, offered Dignities, Bishopricks, and gave Degrees to some of those very Men, that this Gentleman thinks to prejudice by his Paper.

5. Till the Act *de Heretico Comburendo*, was taken away, this very Writer, if he be a resolute *Protestant*, was under the evil eye of the Law, and may be under the evil eye of the 35th of *Elizabeth*, if he continue so, and the whole *Protestant* Part of the Kingdom; and who were under the Aspect of the Law of the six Articles? But I say the *Protestant Dissenters* are not under the evil eye of the Laws, but the *Seditious*; and his many Lines are so many Slanders in many places, and impose upon the Reader things, which are contrary to our senses. I can as soon believe *Papery*, as that *Protestant Dissenters* are Enemies to the Government: But what can be answered to such a Gentleman, that says, An Angel from Heaven, might manage (his Argument) with greater Skill, but not produce more Demonstrative Truth: That is to say, An Angel from Heaven, might write more like an Orator than he, but not be a better Logician than he. 'But he seems to be one of that strange sort of People among our selves, 'that (as Dr. Burnet says in his late excellent Sermon before the Lord 'Mayor of London) are not ashamed to own a greater Aversion to any 'sort of *Dissenters*, than to the Church of Rome.

Thus I have made my way to the Conclusion, and as I did begin, so I will end, with humble Application to the Magistrates.

But to all this, the Magistrates will say, they have an Answer ready, *viz.* They do the Duty of their places, and perform their Oaths, and they hope God will not judg them as Sinners, for doing their Duty according to their Oaths; and that the Kingdom of God may come, tho there were not one *Nonconformist* left among us.

Noble Gentlemen! An Oath is sacred, and the wilful Violation of it, a dreadful Sin, provoking the Divine Displeasure: The case is hard, and really worthy of serious Thoughts. For, that learned, and able sound Men, tho *Nonconformists*, ought not to be punished; but on the contrary, protected, permitted, if not encouraged, should be granted without any
Disputa-

Disputation. The Accusation of Rebellion, beginning the Wars, their Cantings, and Tones, and Fanaticism, are really the Abuses of ill-tempered Men, and of factious, and narrow Spirits. Wise, sober, just, and charitable Divines and Christians, that know their own defects, what weak Instruments God hath used in his Church, for greatest Services, and what Temptations attend their Callings, and how great a disadvantage to them, and hindrance to their Learning and Proficiency, their necessities forcing them to sell their Studies; their many Removes, Troubles in their Families have brought upon them, will think and speak otherwise of them; and God hath born Witness to many of them, and given them Gifts, not inferiour to those that despise and expose them, rather like Poets and Painters, than wise impartial Judges, or Witnesses, or Men of Charity. Men in Power should look before they strike, lest they pluck up any one of those Plants, which the Heavenly Father hath planted, and strike the Apple of his Eye. And on the other hand, it seems hard to censure Magistrates for executing the Laws, which seems to be a Duty.

For satisfaction of this great Doubt, I do with all just Honour to Magistrates, and Respect to their Consciences, and Comforts, humbly offer something:

1. It is clear and certain, That no Justice of the Peace is bound by his Oath, or Place, to *promote* the Disturbance or Sufferings of the *Nonconformists*. If any say, They cannot see the Laws broken: true, by Routs and riotous Meetings, that violate the Peace. It is a Fancy and an imaginary Fear, to say, We do not know what Mischief may be in the Meetings of many hundreds, or fewer. There are thousands meet at Fairs, and Markets, and too many are drunk and disorderly, and what fear is there of their Meetings? what disturbance to the Peace? What need of the *Militia* to keep them quiet, or to prevent Insurrections? What Peril is there in the Meetings of Ministers, and Christians of all Sexes and Ages, unarmed, and innocent! It is hard to think they cannot preach, and pray, and sing Psalms, but they must then speak Treason, move Rebellion; that in their civil Conversation, are as peaceable as other Men, and careful of Words and Actions; much less, is it their Duty to imploy or encourage Men of ill Fame, and broken Fortunes, to be Witnesses against them; even such, as are not fit to follow their Dogs, or rub their Horses, have been the most forward in informing.

2. When Information is brought before them, this is also certain, that except it be proved, by better Testimony than what is usually given, that such a Meeting was only upon pretence of Religion, but there was no such Religious Exercise; but on the contrary, false, seditious, rebellious Doctrine was preached, or the People were stirred up to Disobedience;

The Testimony doth not reach the end, or matter of the Act, and by Consequence, the Justice is not bound to take notice of it. If he upon such an Information, that such a Man, preached to such a Number, in such a place, and such a time, shall issue forth his Warrants, then he punisheth Religious Exercises absolutely, and not respective to the ill Designs of Rebellion, and the like. I do conceive, except the Proof be, that such a Minister or Preacher, did move to Sedition, or Rebellion, or other Ends, forbidden, a Justice is not bound by his Office, to punish them; if upon the common Information that is given, that such a Man preached, and such were present, and no such Words tending to Rebellion proved, or offered to be proved: Then I beseech you consider, whether upon pretence of preventing or punishing Seditious Meetings, you really exercise your Power to obstruct, discourage, or punish peaceable and good Subjects, for Religious Exercises? And so, as it is a horrid Wickedness in any Man, upon pretence of Religious Duties, to carry ill Designs against the Government; so what is it, to pretend ill Designs, where there are no such things, as much as implied in any Discourses, and to punish Men for Religious Exercises?

3. It is certain, a Justice may enquire and try the fitness of the Witnesses, whether they be idoneous, *boni & legales Homines*; they should be Men of Knowledge and Understanding, of Probity and Truth, and of Estates; Men that know what they can attest, punctual as to words spoken, and the true sense and scope of them, and Witnesses that will not lye, that know what it is to swear, and that fear a Lye, and the common Sin of Perjury. If a Mans word cannot be taken, his Oath may be refused, especially in a matter wherein his own Gain is the prime motive to his Testimony, and swearing. In such a Case it is great Charity in the Magistrate, to dehort the Informer from his swearing ignorantly, rashly, or falsely; and he cannot without great suspicion of Sin, if not plain Sin, forwardly take the Testimony upon Oath of ignorant, ungodly, and scandalous Informers. I never yet knew, or heard of any other sort of Men, that gave Testimony against the *Nonconformists*, as may appear in due time.

4. It is certain, no Justice is bound by Oath, to misapply the Laws, either without respect to the scope of them, or the Persons upon whom they are executed; I have taken notice of this, in the fore-going Discourse. I am now more confirmed, that the Act of the 35th of *Elizabeth*, was a two-edged Act, but made and pointed more directly against the *Papists*, than any other. In that Parliament, Sir *Tho. Edgerton* Lord Keeper, Sir *Rob. Cecil*, Secretary of State, Sir *John Woolley*, Sir *John Fortescue*, did all declare or confirm, 'That the occasion of that Parliament, was the cause of Religion, the Maintenance thereof, the Preservation of Her Majesties Person,

‘ Person, and the Good of the Realm. (Mark I beseech you) *The Enemy of these is the King of Spain, — and the Pope the Anti-christ of Rome, said Sir Rob. Cecil. From the holy League, and the Papists (the holy League of the Guisians, to root out the Protestants in France-) said Sir John Wolley. They that spake before me, spake sufficiently of the Authors of our Troubles, said Sir John Fortescue. I did look with great Expectation for some full Discoveries of fears and dangers from the Puritans in those Days, but could not find a word concerning any, but the Brownists, which were spoken of by Sir Walter Rawleigh, and deserve to be transcribed. — In his Conceit, the Brownists were worthy to be rooted out of a Common-wealth; but what Dangers may grow to ourselves, if this Law passeth, it were fit to be considered; for it is to be feared that Men not guilty, will be included in it. And that Law is hard that taketh Life, or sendeth into Banishment, where Mens Intentions shall be judged by a Jury, and they shall be Judges what another Man meant. But that Law that is against a Fact that is just, and punish the Fact, as severely as you will, &c. (as was quoted before, from that great and famous Man.) — to turn this Law upon Orthodox, sound Men, and spare the Papists, is too plain a perversion of the Law, from the sence of the greatest States-men, in that prosperous Reign of Q. Elizabeth; no Justice can pretend Obligation from his Oath, or Conscience so to do.*

5. They are no more obliged by their Office, to execute these Laws against *Dissenters*, than they are to execute other Penal Laws. Is there not a Law, that no *Papist* shall go above five Miles from his own House, or place of Abode after lawful Conviction? Are all *Papists* convicted according to Law, and do they keep their Bounds? Is there not a Law of this Kings, for Observation of the Sabbath? and who is convicted or punished by it? Is there not a Law prohibiting Gaming, above one hundred Pound at one meeting? and have all Gentlemen and Gamesters kept it? The Act for 12 d. a Sunday, for not coming to Church, was intended against the Negligent, and not the Recusant, it being against Law to punish Men for the same fault twice: as Mr. R. Owen said upon the debate upon that Bill. But the N. C.

Mr. Townshend's
Historical Collections of the 4th Parl. of Queen Elizabeth. An. 1593. Eliz. 35th, p. 58, 59.

I have shewed in the foregoing Plea, our N. C. are not Brownists: Collections p. 76.

But now our N. C. are not as much as tried by a Jury; but upon the Evidence of a scandalous Informer, and Villains, hired by him, to swear what is for his coveted Gain.

Elizab. 35th, c. 2.

Collect. ib. p. 173.

are and have been punished many times, and ways. Who can tell how many thousands of negligent Persons live in *London*, that go neither to Church, nor Conventicle; and who is so zealous against these, as against Conventicles? Surely then the Obligation of the Justice's Oath, is not taken to be so strict in some, as in all Cases, (as indeed they are) or else a Justice is not bound to enquire after Transgressors, but to keep his own Place, and do Justice when complained unto.

6. But suppose, That the Informers of Conventicles, are honest and true Men, idoneous and fit, for the Meeting be notorious: then consider, that the Law requiring the Justice to proceed against them, is a Penal Law: Any Justice of the Peace, or Chief Magistrate that shall wilfully omit the performance of his Duty in the prosecution of this Act, shall forfeit a hundred Pound, one moiety of it to the Informer; but to whom the other moiety shall be forfeited is not expressed. If the Informer will be so courageous, as to sue the Justice so omitting his Duty, he loses 50*l*.

Now the difficulty lieth in this, The Law against Conventicles doth require the Justice of Peace, or chief Magistrate, to make Record of such an Assembly; that makes it his Duty, or in case of Omission, he shall forfeit 100*l*. (if the Informer will be so bold as to sue for it) here's the Penalty; the Law is a mixed, and not purely Penal Law. If any Magistrate be so strictly conscientious, as to hold himself bound to execute his Office, he may inquire into two things; First, The goodness and necessity of the Law, which makes his Duty necessary. Secondly, His Omission is supposed, and upon that Supposition, his Penalty is assigned.

For the first, There is no scruple to be made, if any do under pretence of Religious Exercises, contrive Insurrections, but then it is the Magistrate's Duty to God, the King, and his Government, to execute the Laws. But,

2. No such Crime being proved, but pretended, to suppress all Religious Exercises, performed without the Liturgy, and the Penalties being grievous to the Subject, and the Law, in effect, declared to be grievous by several Parliaments, altho the Law be actually in force, yet it is under the Censure of Parliaments, and hath lost its credit, and reputation of Goodness, and must be looked on, as one of those Laws that are better null'd than continued; and the Execution of it must be suspended, as tending to unnecessary vexation of good Subjects, and a scandal upon the *Protestant Dissenting Brethren*, to render them as suspicious as our Enemies, the *Papists*. And if we may guess at the Law, by the Penalty upon the Justice that omits his Duty, or rather at the Intention of the powerful part that carried it; they did not so much provide against Insurrections, as against the total ruine of the *Nonconformists*: for can the forfeiture of a hundred pounds be a sufficient punishment upon him, that omits to

make

make a Record of so mischievous a Contrivance as an Insurrection! no, not the greatest Estate in *England*, can recompence such an Omission; nor is the Life of any Justice an equal Punishment. To the second, I propose this, The Omission being supposed, the Forfeiture is certain (if the Informer will be so daring) but 50 *l.* First, Whether it be not better, that a Justice of the Peace, or Magistrate, should venture the Loss of 50 *l.* which he doth but venture (for what Informer will dare to sue Gentlemen of Honour, Estates, and Interest?) than many Families should be utterly undone? Secondly, If the Execution be better forborn, as I hope I have cleared, then it were better a Justice of Peace should lay down his Commission, than act against the real Interest and Union of *Protestants*, and make spoil of many Mens Estates. Thirdly, If Forfeitures upon Justices should be recovered, and the payment too heavy for them to bear; then they may do great Service to their King, to the Church, to their Country; 1. To the King, as *Pliny* did to *Trajan*, concerning the Christians, *sed nihil aliud inveni quam Superstitionem pravam & immodicam*; representing to the King, they find no Seditions, nor Insurrections, nothing among the *Nonconformists*, but their Nonconformity. 2. To the Church by the same Representation, as a means to heal us. 3. To their Country, by forbearing the ruine of thousands of Families.

But if you shall for saving 50 or 100 *l.* or for ambition of a Place of Power, or to rise into Business and Preferment, or from Prejudice against *Nonconformists*, or distaste and enmity at Religion, proceed, you sin exceedingly against God and Man.

I beseech you, Honoured Sirs, despise not the humble Address of a Minister of Christ in the Church of *England*, on the behalf of Christ, and his divided Church, and multitude of precious Souls; and out of Duty to yourselves, lest you be found abusing your power against Religion, in Zeal to those things, which are but Modes and Forms, which commend no Man to God. Shall I say, it had been good for many, they had never bin Justices, or Magistrates? or that some had never been born, than be the occasion of great Shame, and Reproach, great and many Losses, and Sufferings to Ministers, in their Names, Estates, Health, &c. of great Trouble and Affliction to many tender Wives, by Frights, and Separation from their Husbands; yea of Sickness and Death to many of the holy Servants of Christ: Many oppressed Families groan under their Losses and Sufferings, and pray for them that have persecuted them from one Country to another, from one Prison to another; and if God hear their Prayers, then many of their Afflictors must repent, and should repair their Losses for Conscience sake. Many very dark and rude Places and People have been enlightened, many young and dissolute Persons have been converted by Pray-

ers, Preaching, and Books of the *Nonconformists*. If you suppress their Teachers, if you give order to spoil them of their Goods, you starve the Nurse, and kill the Souls of many thousands that are nursed, and brought up by their Ministry, with the sincere Milk of the Word of God. That I may not be a lamenting Spectator of a doleful Tragedy, I have taken this freedom, and used plainness of Speech, and convincing Reasons to my power. There is a great Chasm and Breach, and see how God punisheth us for not healing the first Division. General *Monk* used the word *Fanatick*, in the Parliament, when he declared himself, more properly, than it hath been since applied. How did the word take and spread? how was it applied and misapplied! Others called those Men *Fanaticks*, who were a great, wise, sober, loyal, considerable part of the Nation. Here a Separation began! A great number of holy and able Pastors are cast out, to the great grief of more than themselves. A Breach is made by a standing Law within the Church, and Kingdom; some have made a Division of Church-men, and moderate, of Presbyterian Bishops, and rigid, of Protestant Bishops, &c. — And since, of Petitioners, and Abhorrrers of Addresses, and Non-Addressees; and now under scandalous and vile names of *Whigg* and *Tory*. Our Church-Divisions eat into the very heart of the Kingdom. We seem to be disjoyned in the National-Interest, by a prevailing, factious, private Spirit. Friendship and Acquaintance, and Trust, and Confidence are broken! Oh how menacing is this Judgment! Popery watcheth its Opportunity to get up triumphant and regnant. Perfidiousness hath engaged to open to it, and Perjury and Persecution are the most conducing means to introduce it. Cut off the *Nonconformists* first, beggar, and famish, and lay them fast; next compose a Test, in the nature of the *Sphinx Augustana*, or *Cassadran* Consultation for the *Conformists*, to separate the Moderate from the Genuine, and what next? The fear of which, and compassion to Posterity, and zeal for true Religion, would make a dumb Man speak, and he that cannot, write. Noble Sirs, If you will not hearken to Reason, befriend Religion, believe your Senses, and deny a carnal Interest, for an eternal; imitate the Clemency of our Gracious King (whom God long preserve) who is over us, as *Seneca* speaks of the King of Bees, He hath no Sting; *Rex ipse sine aculeo est*. But if you are resolved, or engaged in such a Work, Be pleased to do these things.

1. Laying aside Prejudice, study the Case of the *Nonconformists*, and their Reasons for it; you shall find it best, and clearest,

London, 1661.

in the Account of the Proceedings in the *Savoy*, and Petition for Peace; In Mr. *Baxter's Pleas* for the *Nonconformists*; Apology to the Bishops; Defences against Dr. *Stillingfleet*, and Dr. *Hinkley*, and others: And the Questions in Controversy, clearly

clearly stated by Mr. *Giles Fermen*; I suppose you have read the other side.

2. Consider what is, and hath been preached and written for Accommodation; and do not account them the worst, but the best Divines, that have been and are for Accommodation; and see what was done by those Great Men, Lord-Keeper *Bridgman*, Chief-Justice *Hale*, Bp *Wilkins*, &c.

3. Oppose not, but consider the Reasons of the Long-Parliament, 1. in making these Acts; 2. Their, and succeeding Parliaments Debates and Resolves for Union of *Protestants*.

4. Is this a time to afflict *Protestants* at home, when we entertain persecuted *Protestants* from abroad?

5. Lay aside all private worldly Interest. Peace was never preserv'd by Faction; it is inconsistent with Justices of the Peace to suppress a Faction, by being factious.

6. Be clear from all sinister Pre-conceits, Passion, and Disaffection to Practical Holiness and Piety.

7. Be assured you must give account to Jesus Christ of your Administration; and this is your time to act and shew your Faith, Hope and Love to Christ, his Gospel, his People, your detestation of Impiety and Sin, and to be true to your Selves, and your eternal Concernments.

8. Receive not ill Reports (act not by them) of them that differ from you.

9. Pre-conceive the Effects of your Proceedings, whether they will be for God's Glory, the King's Service, the Kingdom's Good, and for your own Peace and Comfort when you come to dye.

10. Pray for a Blessing upon your Proceedings; see what Approbation he hath given, and whether it be likely to please or displease him. If God hath blessed, or prospered them that did execute the Laws, then it is an Encouragement to you: if not, forbear.

Consider what is said by *Gamaliel*, Act. 5. 38, 39. *Refrain from these Men, and let them alone: for if this Counsel, or this Work be of Men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

And by our Gracious King in one of his Declarations, viz. — *It being evident by the sad Experience of twelve years, that there is little fruit of all those forcible Courses, &c.*

F I N I S .

ERRATA.

PAge 2. line 34. read open. P. 4. l. 30. r. Me. P. 6. Marg. r. Persecutions.
 ib. Marg. r. *Ænæi*. P. 27. marg. r. ferri. p. 30. marg. after thankful
 remembrance, c. 13. add *Historical Collections in the Address*. p. 36. l. 2. r.
 some few. p. 41. l. 12. r. of the Law. ib. l. 16. r. if you all proceed, &c.
 P. 44. l. 27. r. to procure. P. 48. l. 1. f. Séverity, r. Security. P. 49. l. 36.
 r. for not subscribing only. P. 51. l. 13. r. such as have. p. 57. five last
 lines must be thus read: — and why may not fallible Imposers be deceived,
 say they. If they suffer for not sinning against God and Conscience, if they
 suffer for performing Religious Exercises, they suffer for Religion, accord-
 ing, &c. p. 60. l. 36. f. case, r. cant.

The Reader is entreated to pardon, or correct the rest; the Author, being
 remote from the Press, has not seen all the sheets.

Non-coin 3. Plea By J. P. [Signature]

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K. CHARLES I.

ΕΙΚ. ΒΑΣΙΛ. 27. *To the Prince of Wales.*

BEware of exasperating any Factions by the Crossness and Asperity of some Mens Passions, Humours and private Opinions imployed by you, grounded only upon Differences in lesser Matters, which are but the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion.

— Wherein a charitable Connivance, and Christian Toleration often dissipates their Strength, whom rougher Opposition fortifies.

Conformist's Third Plea.

F O R T H E

Nonconformists.

Argued from the King's Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs ;

Grounded upon the approved Doctrine,

A N D

Confirmed by the Authorities of many Eminent Fathers and Writers of the Church of *England*.

By the Author of the two former P L E A S.

Edward Pearce

Lord Bishop of Cork's Protestant Peace-maker, Pag. 128.

To these who ask, What need of more Union? I return, What need of more Holiness? What need of Godliness, charity, Justice? Are these Christian Duties? and is not Union and Peace as much so? — I am, and must be in the mind, that the Strength of the Protestant Cause, both here at home, and throughout Christendom lies in the Union of Protestants; and the Glory, Purity and Power of Christianity, in this World stands or falls with Protestantism.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. D. for Jonathan Robinson, at the Golden Lion
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDC LXXX II.

Conformity & Disconformity

Nonconformity.

Addressed to the King's Deputies
in the House of Commons
on the 14th of May 1689.

Presented upon the approved Doctrine
of the Church of England.

Printed by the Stationers of the
City of London, and Writings of the
Church of England.

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A PREFACE to the Christian and Peaceable Reader, that seeks the things that be of Christ.

A Zeal for Peace and Union hath overcome all Discouragements arising from many Causes, and inspired me to a Boldness prevailing against much Fear, even to publish the secret Workings of my Heart. As long as the Church dare shew her Face, my Notions are not afraid of the Light; they can receive no Luster from my Name: let them go forth in that Light and Power, which the Father of Lights, and the God of Peace hath given, and shall give unto them; and if they may but give any Light to discover the way of Peace, let me not only ly in Obscurity, which I love, because fittest for me, but be disgraced by them, who speak all manner of Evil of me. If I have not forsaken, and betrayed the Truth, I have not forsaken nor betrayed the Church; and when you come to see the Weapons which I handle, and the Leaders and Authorities which I follow, in the following Treatise, as well as the Cause for which I plead, I hope you will be convinced, that as far as I have pleaded for the Nonconformist Brethren, I have not run from my Colours. There is common Truth, a large and spacious ground to take them in, and to build up one and the same Fabrick upon it, comfortable to all true Christians, receptive of all the Family of God, and impregnable against all their and our Enemies. It is some Relief and Comfort to see many lift up their Feet, i. e. come and view the Desolations of the Church of Christ among us; to be affected with them, and some in whom is an excellent Spirit, are contriving to bring the separate Apartments under one Roof, and within one Line and Wall. And these do stand upon the Rock of Evangelical Principles, when not supported by the Arm of Flesh: But no sooner do Arbitrators move for a Reconciliation, but others do all they can to thrust them from them, without respect to their Persons, or due Reverence to Truth and Reason. He that interposeth in this Difference, doth at the Peril of Opposition. The R. Rev. Author of the first Naked Truth, hath found this true; though his Quality and Person were more than guest at, yet the Episcopal Staff could not bear off the Lashes of several Junior Writers from the Back of Naked Truth. But Truth, be it never so naked, can bear Blows and Lashes, as it hath always born the Violence of Storms and Times: Truth cannot long be confined within Doors, but will appear in open view, whatever its Entertainment be, whether Scorns, Contradictions, Laughter, and Mockery, Abuses, and Scourgings, or Approbation and Honour. The Appearance of such a Book as that Naked Truth, at such a time, was like a Comet, it drew the Eyes of all that could look upon it; it was a Divine Manifestation of a Primitive Christian-Spirit of Love. And certainly, as that pious Endeavour hath encreased

his Comforts, so he hath not lost all his Labour ; for since that, we have had more Overtures of Peace, than we heard of in the many Years of Discord and Troubles, from the Learned in the Church of England. The Nonconformists have born all the Blame, and Scorn, and Sufferings of our Divisions ; and have offered as much towards Peace and Accommodation as was possible for them to offer. But partly their Writings, and the doleful State of Religion, have drawn out some Wishes and Concessions from some Men of Eminency in the Church, towards Peace and Accommodation. And tho these as yet seem too little, yet there is much to be gathered from them ; first, as to their Propensity to Peace.

2. The Influence which their Concessions may have upon austerer Tempers.

3. Because they being satisfied in the Point of Conformity, as to their own Practice, do yet for a greater Good and Peace incline to a Compromise. The Learned Dean of St. Paul's hath, with submission to Authority, made some Proposals ; and I hope would yield to more, if the Composure were put into his hand. Even Dr. Sherlock, who is curantly thought to have written

Pag. 103. the Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet, doth wish with all his Heart, that some Expressions were altered, to prevent any Scandal to the scrupulous, or to the profane ; this he writes only for the Office of Burial of the Dead, which he calls an excellent Office, supposing the due Exercise of Church-Discipline, to cast all notorious Sinners and Schismaticks out of the Communion of the Church, which the Church supposeth to be done. I am of

Pag. 102. his Mind, concerning the Excellency of that Office ; It is most comfortable to the Minister, and most Comfort to all true Christians, when we can use it upon good Evidences concerning the Dead. But as the visiting of the Sick hath been too often to me, the most uncomfortable Office of my Ministry ; so it hath been a great Addition of Sorrow, to commit these Bodies to the Earth, concerning whom I had no hope of their resting in Christ. O what dejecting Stories could I write of too many ! but I forbear. If he be so sensible of the ill use which may be made of that excellent Office, and do so heartily wish, that some Expressions were altered to prevent Scandal to the scrupulous and profane ; methinks for the same Reasons he might wish more Alterations might be made, in other things, and Offices. Most frank and ge-

Protestant-Peace-maker, p. 29.

nerous are those Expressions of the Right Reverend and Pious Bishop of Cork ; ' We are ready to sacrifice all we can otherwise (i. e. without Schism) to the publick Peace and Safety ; what most of the Dissenters would be at (no Liturgy, no Episcopacy, no Uniformity) may not be, cannot be without Schism, p. 32. The only Steps by which we can mutually move to Peace, I with all submission conceive to be these : 1. That we all would seriously study Self-denial, and that with a peculiar Eye and regard to Accommodation ; one perhaps of Popularity, another of a particular Humor, another of somewhat else. All of what soever good Conscience tells us is less valuable

'valuable than common Union; p. 33. — But notwithstanding, what I have
 'said of the Excellency, both of the Common-Prayers, and of Cathedral
 'Performances, I do conceive the Alteration of an Expression, or here and
 'there of a whole Prayer or two by Law, or dispensing with some Ceremonies in
 '1600 — I do not conceive such Relaxation as this would break the
 'Harmony and Beauty of our Worship, or disturb the Union and Peace of our
 'Church. There are some Collects, and perhaps some Rubricks too, which with
 'all duty and submission I humbly conceive might be altered for the better. pag.
 118, 119. This honourable Ambassador of Peace speaks home, and from his heart,
 and shall for ever sit high in the esteem of all the Sons of Peace. Here are Propo-
 sals (conditional indeed, with the consent of Authority, as they should be) that
 will certainly be embraced by Dissenters. But now, if the Church should conde-
 scend, (if I may call that a Condescension which is done for Christ?) as far as
 it can without Schism; and the Dissenters as far as they can with a good Con-
 science: What shall be done if they cannot come up to a full and perfect closure?
 Shall the Dissenter have no benefit by his Consent to the great things? and the
 greatest number of things (in which they agree already) shall he be not only
 excluded, but punished, altho he continue peaceable in his Dissent? In such a case,
 here is an apparent Necessity of mutual Forbearance in Love, and of the Bond
 of Peace, to keep in the Unity of the Spirit. And here I cannot without a great
 respect to another Conformist of Worth and Quality, (as I am informed) re-
 peat the Words, which are like a healing Plaster to a heart bruised between our
 grating Differences. 'The way to make National Religion most National, is
 'by comprehending all the Differences that can be reconciled with true Religion;
 'while they that dissent in some things, receive one another, with a good, peaceable,
 'holy and publick Temper of Mind; as the great Argument and Inducement of
 'which, we should all pray for the Acceptance of the holy Service of all that
 'call on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (as the Apostle distinguishes
 'Christians, but immediately unites them again) both theirs and ours; they
 'and we, whatever smaller Distinctions make the [They] and the [We]
 'are both one in our Lord Jesus Christ: We ought to pray for the common Be-
 'nefit of all so united, though not bound up in the same common Form with us,
 'for a gracious Audience and Reception of their and our Worship of God, that
 'so the Spirit of Love and Union in the main, may convey all our Services into
 'one before God, where indeed (if they are as he requires) they meet stript
 'of all their outward Circumstances, Form and Ceremony: Faith and Obedi-
 'ence being alone able to mount thither with them. And Services so raised, can
 'by no means be spared for small Differences in a National Religious Interest;
 'for the Angels of all such, behold the Face of our Fa-
 'ther in Heaven. Thus that excellent Person, who writes The whole Duty
 'himself a Minister of the Catholick Church as it is of Nations, p. 61.
 'National in England.

The same Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation breaths forth in peaceable Discourses of true Protestant Christian Gentlemen of excellent Learning, and hearty Concernment for their and our Religion, taking several ways. The Learned Sir Thomas Overbury hath proposed many Questions of great Weight, and discoursed upon them piously and smartly: Sir John Mallet hath drawn up the Contents that might be Heads of useful and necessary Discourses for Gentleness

Letter to the Author of the Guide to the English Juries, printed after it.

towards Protestant Dissenters, tho he himself and Family come duly to Church-Service and Sacraments, and use some of the Common-Prayers in his Family. The Author of the Appendix to Mr. Hunt's Argument, hath discovered a good Will to Peace and Accommodation:

But most fully and of set-purpose a very learned and true Christian Gentleman, that holds constant Communion with the Church of England, hath turned aside, answering the Title of his Book, like a good Samaritan, to help up a bleeding Church, and powr a Composition of choice Preparations, to heal her Wounds. But alas! have not, and do not our Sins separate between us and our God? Oh! how are they increased, that make that Separation! O! how hot are they against a Separation that is both curable and tolerable in comparison of theirs! If their Assemblies, if their Exercises were called seditious, and Twenty Pounds upon the Houses of their Assemblies, and but 5 s. upon every one that communicates in their Sins, it would be more pleasing to God, and more for the Establishment and Prosperity of the Kingdom, than their Prosecutions of Dissenters in point of Ceremony: many of these consult, keep their Meetings sedulously, concur unanimously, and lay Spies in wait to apprehend the Preachers of the Word of Salvation. These breath out Threatnings, and what they will do! But if this chancee to fall into any of their Hands, I will present one

Casp. Peucer, Historia Carcerum, Part 2. pag. 773.

warning more, and a notable Example to them, William Lantgrave of Hesse, made Intercession with Augustus the Elector of Saxony, for Dr. Peucer, Prisoner a long time, for his dissent in the Ubiquitarian Controversy.

The Elector promised his release, if Anne his Duchess would be willing, and desired him to try her first: she replied according to her Obstinacy, If she lived, he should not be released. Which Answer of hers, the Lantgrave, and other wise Men, did thus interpret, That the Dutcheffs should shortly dy, that Peucer by her Death might be released; and so it proved, according to their Interpretation, she died, saith Dr. Peucer, in that very moment, in which I dreamed in my Sleep, of a great and noble Funeral, and a bell ringing, and as the Bell-rope brake, that Verse of the Psalm came into my Mind, Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler; the Snare is broken, and we are escaped. And among what Prodigies, she died, is known to all.

I am confident, if the Persecutors of our peaceable and religious Nonconformist

mists were studious to prepare for Death, they would forbear this Work; and as it is dreadful for any of them to dy in their Sins, unrepented of, and to dy in this Sin, so let them take heed, that some of the greatest of them do not fall by an apparent Hand of God. I do profess if I had any Friend engaged in this horrid Work, I would perswade him, if possible, to forbear, if he had any regard to his Soul, to his Life, to his Family and Posterity; if any true Loyalty to his Sovereign, if kindness to the Church and Country; for this is a fighting against God, a walking contrary to him; and what can they expect but that God should walk contrary to them? Well, we read, Blessed are they that are persecuted for Righteousness sake, for any part of Righteousness and Religion, but there's none for them that persecute. Blessed are they who lay to heart the doleful State of the Protestant Religion, that consult her Peace, and that appear for her Peace in this day of her Fear and Trouble. When others are pronouncing Wo to themselves, and Wo to others; these will find Peace in their own Souls, who have studied the Peace of the Church, by healing her Breaches. If any should say to the first movers of this Work now in hand, as Olivarius the Chancellor of France, when in great Terrors, said to the Cardinal of Lorrain: Ah, ah, Cardinalis, tu nos omnes in æternum exitium trahis: it will be no allay of Horrors, nor relief to Conscience, if any Divine or Confessor shall say, as the Cardinal did to him; You are tempted of the unclean Spirit, persist in the Faith. To this fearful Story, I will add the words of that Historian, Hæc est merces Judicium quibus Aulicæ Gratiæ fumus, tua Conscientia potior est: He might have added, & omnium, and of all that prefer Court-Favour, which is but Smoak, to the Light and Peace of their own Consciences. The Sufferers are much to be pitied; the divided Body of Christ is more to be pitied, but they who stretch out their Hands to vex the religious and truly pious Sufferers, are both to be feared and pitied; because it is a more fearful thing for them to fall into the Hands of the living God, than for them, who religiously fear God, to fall into their Hands. To put an end to the Sufferings of true Protestants in a Protestant Kingdom, and to prevent an apprehended and feared Desolation, good Mens Thoughts are at work, and several Proposals for Accommodation are made publick. And I wonder at the Providence of God, that when too many are extream busy with Hands and Tongues to tear us into more and new Distractions, others, and they Members of the Church-Communion, appear as strongly prepared to receive the Ejected. What this Providence may speak, I will not be so bold as to interpret, but it raiseth up some hopes, when we are dejected under the dejecting Apprehensions of considering Men. It is manifest, that most that are engaged in suppressing the Non-conformists, read little, consider as little, it is but vain to write for their sakes; and those that read a little of much that is said, are strongly pre-engaged, or are afraid, or covetous to save themselves, or carried by some other Affection

Parel. Mellif. Hist.
Part 3. p. 343. Eccl. 4.
Anno 1631.

and Temptation, and that which is most fearful of all, are under a strong Delusion. If we were not under some degrees of a Delusion, it were impossible that Men should be so impolitick, and irreligious. I am grieved, and ashamed to read how Gundamor did delude a great, wise, and Protestant Kingdom (in his Account of his Embassy to the Council in Spain) in two great Instances of his Craft, pernicious to our Church and State. 1. A Parliament, said Gundamor! nay, therein lies one of the principal Services I have done, in working such a dislike between the King and the lower House, by the Endeavour of that honourable and admirable Engine, a sure Servant to us — as the King will never endure a Parliament again. 2. For Religion, as Bancroft, who maintained a dangerous Schism between our Seculars and the Jesuits —; this taughme, as it did Barne-

Out of a M.S. that lay in the Study of a Loyal Divine, related to the Earl of Stratford, printed by Mr. Rich. Dugdale, 1679, and by T. S. (Mr. Scot, in his *Vex Populi*,) printed An. 1624.

vel in the low Countries, to work secretly and insensibly between the Conformist and the Nonconformist —. He brag'd he had the Head of Sir W. Raleigh at command; got Dr. Everard of St. Martin's silenced, and Dr. Whiting, and Mr. Clayton, for preaching against them; and that Mr. Ward of Ipswich did not escape, for his Picture of 88. He advised the Jesuits, who consulted in Fetter-Lane, (and had a Printing-Press at a Goldsmith's House) to sow Dissention between the Prince and People. How warmly do some accomplish the Advice of Contzen the Jesuit, to bring in Popery? Rule 3. The Doctors and leading Pastors must be put out, if it may be, all at once, if not, by degrees. R. 8. Let the People be told, the Ministers are heady, obstinate Men; that they are faulty, and have deserved to be put out. R. 6. To bring in Popery, is to make use of the Protestant Contentions. R. 7. To forbid the Protestants privately or publicly to assemble together. 8. To proceed to the Severity of Laws and Punishments —. But now many are so imposed upon, as tho they did not believe what they cannot but believe, and as if they believed what they have no reason to suspect. O that many both of our Preachers and Prosecutors would diligently read and consider, that excellent Sermon of our renowned Father Bishop Jewel, on Mat. 9. Pray the Lord of the Harvest that he would send Labourers into his Harvest. Take a few Gleaning of it: 'O lift up your Eyes and consider how the 'Hearts of your Brethren ly waste without Instruction, without Knowledge, without the Food of Life, without the Comfort of God's Word! such a Misery as 'was never seen among Heathens. The Turks have Preachers sufficient for their 'People —, the Jews have their Teachers, &c. The Christians when they 'lived under Tyrants —, never lacked Ministers to instruct them. It is therefore most lamentable, that Christians living under a Christian Prince, in the 'Peace and Liberty of the Gospel, should lack learned Ministers to teach them: 'This is the greatest Plague that God sends upon a People: contrary-wise, the 'greatest Blessing any People can receive at God's Hands, is to have Prophets and

and Preachers —. But when God taketh away his Ministers which should preach Peace and open to the People the Will of God; and make known his Judgments, it is a Token that God is highly displeased with his People, &c. I may be blamed for this Quotation, as if it were scandalous to the Government, a popular delusion of People to Discontent: Yes, I know what may be said; but let the deplorable, dark, starving Condition of multitudes of Places in this Kingdom be view'd; and it is true, that People perish for want of Knowledge. I have known where one pitiful Curat (Journey-man indeed) that could make but a poor shift to save the Liturgy and Psalms between him and the Clerk, hath been all that three great Congregations had had, unless a Stranger had preached to two of them in one day. The want of Maintenance is very great in all Parts of the Kingdom; but the want of Ministers, of sound, convincing, plain, edifying, faithful Ministers, is exceeding great, and far greater. I cannot but pity, and speak of what I know, by good report, such hath been the hunger and want of Spiritual Bread in large Places, that poor Souls that go constantly to Common-Prayer, have crowded into the Prayers, and charitable Preaching, or Exhortations of a Nonconformist. O how painfully have I seen poor Souls travel on foot several Miles to hear a profitable Sermon from some Conformist! Nonconformity and Conformity is a Mystery to poor Souls; they can wave the Distinction, for their Profit and Edification. Good Preaching is as scarce as Gold in many poor Countries, and more precious: Poor Souls are never the better for some Ministers, and a great deal the worse for others; some have not, and care not for the Study of the great Gift of Preaching to Conversion and Salvation; some may do better than they do, but will not, tho they may; and many others that can and would, may not. O what's the State of millions of precious Souls in the mean time! I know London, and other great Places, have plenty of that, as of other Rarities: but if the Scarcity of Countries were but known, and laid to heart, methinks we should not stand so strictly upon Terms, and I am certain, should send out all we can find into the Harvest, rather than silence, and keep out one, or what is much worse, than send the Servants of God, his Stewards, to dig and beg, to set the veriest Catch-Poles upon Earth, the Lions, the absurd and unreasonable Men, that have not so much Faith as Devils have, to watch for them to arrest them; first, leisurely to undo them, and afterwards to apprehend them, and cast them into Prison: To stop the Mouths of able and faithful Preachers, and to imprison them for their Labours, is to let Hell loose in a Nation; and to stop the way to Heaven against many Souls. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! O England, England! — Behold, I send you Prophets and wise Men, and Scribes: some of them you shall persecute from City to City —. A Breach in a human mutable Conformity, will be found more tolerable, than a Breach upon a Protestant Church, upon a Kingdom's Peace and Prosperity —. Latimer followed Ridley to the Stake; but now if Latimer go first, it shall not

be long before Ridley follow. To prevent the apprehended Desolation, and Land-Flood, where the Channell is too strait and narrow; let all that have the Royalty of the River open the Channell wider, that the Ship may have room to turn her in, and the Violence of the Stream abate, by enlarging the Banks; and let there be an Harbour and a Fort built for the shattered Ships: And let me be excused for my good Will, if not thanked for my Invention: I see other wise Contrivances laid by, and some amended, let mine be so too. I do humbly conceive that the Reverend Mr. Baxter hath given great Evidences of a rare Head and Spirit, in the second Part of the Way of Concord, and deserves great Thanks; Mr. Corbet hath written like a wise and excellent Man; Reverend Mr. Humphrey's Peaceable Design, is much observed and respected, and his Defects supplied, by the most worthy Gentleman, the Samaritan, and Exceptions made against him with Amendments, but with great respect by the Excellent and Good Bishop of Cork: In comparison of these Men, I am but as a poor Fellow that plies his Bucket to quench the Fire, while the more skilful ply their invented Engines; or as one that brings Earth in a Basket, or a Barrow, while others draw the Lines, and lay the Plat-form. Here I conceive two things must come into Consideration.

1. What's to be done.

2. What are the Terms of Admittance, and Continuance in the holy Ministry, to be allowed and established by Law.

1. In the first, there are two things comprehended, 1. Substance and Worship; 2. Ceremony and Form.

The Debates are principally for and against Forms and Ceremonies. For both, I make bold to say;

1. There is great Reason why a singular regard ought to be had, and given to the King's Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, for the Wisdom, Moderation, and Comprehensiveness of it; and because, if ever such a thing may come to be offered, we may hope for the Royal Approbation of what may be offered out of it, of which he seem'd so fond, when he promised it.

2. It is clear, that Cathedrals must not be touched, neither Revenues, nor Ceremonies, let them enjoy both, and allow unto others a Liberty in another kind, while they may enjoy theirs, without mutual and uncharitable Censures and Contentions.

3. It is clear, there must be a Liturgy; and very many, even to Dr. Sherlock, mention some Alterations in the several Parts of it, as desirable and advisable, without any positive Arrogance in a Matter of this Nature. I do offer my Observation, Some that expect much Profit by Preaching, do think first and second Service too long, and tiresome: Others that care less for Preaching, are very busy in the Interlocutory Parts of the Service, grow careless, and too often prate (and stare about and whisper) in the Lessons, and sleep under our Sermons; both are too long for them also. And in some Congregations, there are,

I believe, as many, if not more, Service-Books, than Bibles, which, under Correction, is too little honour for the Bible. All that I will suggest in this last Case is,

1. That the second Service, or Communion-Service, may be then only read, when there is a Communion, or when there is no Sermon. Except the reading the Commandments be frequently enjoined; or, that it may be left at liberty to read either first, or second, or what parts of both may best suit with particular Occasions and Assemblies.
2. That only one of the three Creeds be used at one time, in the same Service.
3. The so often repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the same Service may be limited. All cannot, most do not keep Curats; the work of Reading the ordinary first and second Service, besides incidental Offices, as Baptisms, Churchings, &c. make it very expensive to most Mens strength and spirits, and wearisome to the People: and the constant necessary work of Preaching and Catechising is hardly endured by the young and healthful, but impossible to be performed by the infirm and aged. It is true indeed, if a Man's Conscience will bear it, and the People have no more need, a Minister may be both short, and seldom in the Pulpit; but then it is with two great Hazards: First, of losing his Auditory, or of his Auditories great loss to their Souls. If we did consider the Copiousness of our Work, the frequent Repetitions, Ingeminations, and Enforcements of many great and necessary Arguments, the Succession and Growth of young Ones, and all these of several Capacities, if Preaching be at all necessary to the Instruction, Conversion, Correction, Direction, Consolation, and Salvation of precious Souls, it may not be intermitted without far greater loss than a Masters Absence from his School, or a careful Father, Mother, or Steward, from the Household. This humble Proposal for omitting the second Service, hath a fair Countenance from the Rubricks. There is a Supposition, that the Communion is celebrated every Lord's day (but it is not, except in some few Cathedrals) as appears by some Rubricks; Rubr. the last, immediately before the Lord's Prayer, is this; 'The Table at the Communion-time, having a fair white Linnen Cloth upon it, shall stand in the Body of the Church, or in the Chancel, where Morning and Evening Prayer are appointed to be said: and the Priest standing at the North-side of the Table, shall say the Lord's-Prayer, with the Collect following, the People kneeling. Now I query, Whether the Priest be bound to read that Service, but standing at the North-side of the Table, so placed, so covered, to answer the Title of the Service, which is, The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion: And the Rubricks that follow speak altogether in relation to the Communion; the Rubrick after the Commandments is, 'Then shall follow one of these two Collects for the King, the Priest standing as before, and saying, 'Let us pray —. The Rubrick, after the Nicene Creed, doth suppose the Communion to be celebrated every Lord's-day; or else we omit to declare Holy-days, Bans, &c. There is a great Inconsistency in that Clause of that Rubrick, and then if occasion be, shall notice be given of the Communion: when the former

Rubricks suppose there is one then. The Rubrick before the Prayer for the whole State of Christ's Church is, And when there is a Communion, the Priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine, as he shall think sufficient: After which done, the Priest shall say, Let us pray for the whole State of Christ's Church. I know there is a Rubrick after the Communion Service, that appoints what shall be read, when there is no Communion: which makes a Communion-Service, without a Communion.

Thus much in general for the Things to be done.

The second Thing is the Terms of Admission to the Administration. For this one plain Rule may be sufficient, taken out of the Form of Ordination: That which is a sufficient Condition, or requisite for Ordination and Admission to the Office, is sufficient for the Administration. Or that which is sufficient to make a Man a Minister, is enough to entitle him to the Exercise of his Ministry, except he apostatize, and lose what he seem'd to have. The Person to be ordained or admitted is first to be tried and examined. The Qualifications to be tried are his Calling, and his Qualifications, or fitness for the Office, by the Holy Ghost.

The Qualifications for Learning, are (low enough, and were high enough, if not too high, for the greatest Number at our first Reformation) learned in the Latin Tongue, and sufficiently instructed in the holy Scripture. The

Rubr. for a Deacon. *Bishop doth admonish him, that presents any One to the Office, to present such as be apt and meet for their Learning and Godly Conversation: and if there be no impediment or notable Crime objected by the Congregation, he is admitted, upon his taking the Oath of Supremacy, and answering to the Questions; I. That he doth trust that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take his Office. II. Truly called according to the Will of Christ. III. That he doth unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. IV. That he will diligently read the same unto the People, where he shall be appointed to serve. V. That he will apply all his Diligence to fashion his Life according to the Doctrine of Christ. VI. Reverently to obey his Ordinary. Over and above these Answers, he that is to be ordained Priest, declares VIIly, that he is persuaded, that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrines required of necessity for eternal Salvation through Faith in Jesus Christ, and hath so determined by God's Grace out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the People committed to his Charge, and to teach nothing as necessary to Salvation, but what may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures. VIII. That he will give faithful Diligence always to minister the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ, as the Lord commanded. IX. That he will banish all erroneous and strange Doctrines; use publick and private Monitions, to the Sick and Whole. X. That he will be diligent in reading the Scriptures, and in Studies, laying aside the Study of the World and Flesh. XI. Frame his Life, and the Life of his Family, according to the Doctrine of Christ, and be Examples to the Flock. XII. That*

XII. That he will maintain and promote *Quietness, Peace and Love* among all *Christian People*, especially his charge. XIII. That he will obey his *Ordinary*, and chief *Ministers*, to whom is committed the *Charge and Government* over them.

Now I do suppose that *Subscriptions* will be required of all *Admitted*; and the last *Promise* will be most scrupled. Of this some *Non-Conformists* declare their *Readiness* to obey the *Bishops*, as *Officers* under the *King*, as *supream Governour*; and is also proposed by others. For the *Subscription*, (which is but some kind of *Security*, especially in doubtful and controverted Things)

See Mr. *Humphr.* Matter for *Union* And the *Samaritan*.

Matter of *Subscription*.

Query, If for *Peace* sake it may not be sufficient, if, after due *Examination* of their *Qualifications*, and *Calling* by the *Holy Ghost*, that they declare and subscribe their *unfeigned Belief* of all the *Canonical Scriptures* of the *Old and New Testament*; that they contain all *Doctrine* required of necessity for *eternal Salvation*, and that they will instruct the *People*, committed to their *Charge*, (or any other, to whom they may occasionally preach) and teach nothing, as required of necessity to *eternal Salvation*, but that which they may be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the *holy Scripture*; and that they will diligently and faithfully perform all *Parts* of their *Office*, and order their own *Conversations*, and of their *Families*, (if they have any, or when they shall have) according to the *Doctrine* of *Christ*?

We see upon what *Terms* *Ministers* are ordained; What more should be required of them, as *Ministers*, but a *Discharge* of their *Ministry*, according to their *Trust*, with *Knowledge*, *Diligence* and *Fidelity*? If a *Magistrate*, or any other *Officer*, be made, he may execute his *Office*, without any *After-Restrictions*.

If *Subscription* to the *Articles* be still required, for *Satisfaction* of *foreign Churches* concerning our *Doctrine* and *Faith*, ut certius inde constet omnium *Ecclesiarum* concentus, as *Calvin* wrote to the *Protector*: and as a boundary to our selves, for *Peace* sake, as some would have our *Articles* to be; the *Number* of them are lessen'd in some *Proposals*, and expedients thought upon, for the *Relief* of such, as scruple to subscribe, without a *far Exposition*, agreeable to the *Articles*, and *Analogy* of *Faith*, as in the *Bill* of *Comprehension*.

The *Ceremonies* being either abolished, or left at liberty, according to the *King's Declaration*, the *Subscription*, now required by the *Canon*, ceaseth; and such as this above mention'd may take place, which is taken out of the *Book* of *Ordination*. If it be objected, That this large *Subscription* is too lax, *Socinians* and *Hereticks* may creep in, notwithstanding this. *Ansiv.* So they will, and so they may, and so they have, notwithstanding the present *Subscription*, or any other, in what term almost soever. But their *Orthodoxy* may be tried upon *Examination*, and certified by such as know them personally, and that *Evil* may be

prevented, or remedied when it is divulged: Why shall others be pressed beyond what they can clearly consent unto, for the sake of them that will subscribe to any thing?

By binding them to other, and much scrupled Subscriptions, according to the Canons and new Declarations (except that against Transubstantiation, which is a point of Faith, and not to be omitted) we see many are un-made in effect, who had been made Ministers before. This that is said, is not to the Prejudice of their orderly legal Entrance into Cures, by Officers appointed, nor all that may be said.

This, and whatever else, I have thought of, is from a holy Desire of reconciling Differences, of universal Union, if possible (but that being morally impossible) then of a brotherly peaceable Forbearance, which is a great Duty of the Gospel; and for a Cessation of the great Troubles of our Brethren, which is of pernicious Operation, and will reach further than themselves. And if it might be considered, that Union and Forbearance are of greater Moment, and more clearly revealed and enjoyed, than the things that disunite us, it might abate our Rigors, and heal our Divisions. It is true, Obedience to Magistrates is a clear and necessary Duty, but it is restrained to things antecedently lawful, and practicable: But when the Lawfulness of the things are debated, the refusal of Obedience, contains no Guilt of Rebellion; the Magistrates Power, to require Obedience in lawful things is not gain-said, but the things required are rationally doubted of. And when things are urged principally upon the reason of Authority, it is clear there is little or nothing in the things themselves to commend them to our Observation. And the Magistrate saves his Authority, and is as much obey'd as need be, by making a new Law, that takes off the Obligation of the old, or leaves things indifferent, in their Indifference, as much as by an Obedience to the old.

But against all that is or can be said, it is objected, That the Nonconformists have brought all this Mischief upon themselves, and danger to the Church, and Protestant Interest; for time was (meaning the Savoy Conference, 1661.) when the Bishops might have been persuaded to yield to many Mitigations; but some of them, now Dissenters, answered to the Question, What would you have? All or none. And so they have one part of their Choice.

But as this tends to aggravate their Sufferings; so good Nature and Grace encline us to relieve them, whose Wilfulness hath brought them to a necessity of relief, or suffering. But what if neither some, nor all of them, were guilty of the Stiffness and Rashness imputed to them? then God calls aloud upon those Instruments that are yet alive, by the many Sufferings of good Ministers and People, and by apparent Dangers of the Protestant Religion, both to humble themselves before God, and to make Supplication to him, and Intercession for them, with the Supream Power: For if great detriment come to the Gospel,

and

and to many Souls, by destroying the Shepherds, and scattering the Flock, it is doubtful whether that Allegation will pass for an Excuse, or Plea, that they are Non-Conformists and Dissenters; except they could produce a Warrant from Jesus Christ, deputing them to make such Conditions. I would not for all the Preferments in the Church, charge any falsely, as being Authors of these many Years Troubles, and would sooner beg Forgiveness and repent, than persist in an Error, or do wrong to the Innocent. I have rather acquitted the Non-Conformists from the Blame of drawing these Evils upon themselves, than some of the other side. And, I think, I have as good Warrant for it, as can be desired by one that was not present at the whole Transaction. I am not singular in my Opinion; I find an ingenious Gentleman lay the Fault of our Discomposures upon some old peevish Divines, as he calls them. I have been long possessed with an Opinion also, by the Words of the Presbyterian Commissioners, in the Conclusion of their Account of those Proceedings, in their last Reply. 'For all the rest we thank you —.' And we must say in the Conclusion, that, if these be all the Abatements and Amendments you will admit, you sell your Innocency and the Churches Peace for nothing. If the Pride, Faction, or Rashness of any one, or more, of the Commissioners, who desired a Reformation, had precipitated him into Disputation, and Contention, or a Refusal of reasonable Mitigations, why should others suffer for the Indiscretion of one? and why had not the other Side, who were potent in Friends, and highest in Favour, and either advanced, or near an Advancement into the highest Watch-Tower, condescended to some Things, that might be grateful to all moderate Men, and no just Offence to many others, and taken the Way for a lasting Peace, and so comprehensive a Settlement, that true Labourers might have been their Fellow-Labourers. I shall not in haste forget the sorrowful Complaint of a very wise and learned Conforming Divine, that could say as much to all Points of Conformity, as most, if not any of them all, The Way of Peace we have not known. I hear his Fears multiply with his Years, and grow heavy upon him with his great Age. But upon whomsoever the Blame of our Breaches may fall, (as may appear, when a faithful History of that Conference may see the Light, which I hope to see in convenient Time.) A great Duty lies upon all true Protestants, by Prayers, Counsels, and all kind of Endeavours, to heal our Breaches, to procure Liberty to the sound and able Preachers of the Word of Life, and that neither they, nor any that fear God, and worship him in Truth, may become a Prey to them that commonly profane God's great Name, seldom worship him in Publick, and never took Joshua's Resolution for himself and his House, that can be seen by their Practice: and this every Man will do, whose Heart is ruled by the Peace of God.

I cannot end, but must take the Freedom to speak a few Words more, especially to my Conformable Brethren in the Ministry, and Justices of the Peace.

I have

Appendix to
Mr. Hunt's Argument.

I have laboured (reverend Brethren) to raise a Building (if you will vouchsafe to look into it) capacious to hold all or most of our dissenting Brethren, who now ly out of Doors, and strong to endure all the Batteries of our Adversaries, upon the Doctrines of our famous Bishops and Doctors, as upon a Foundation. I am certain I have misquoted none of them, nor forced them from their Native Sence and Coherence: If I have failed in my arguings, and kept not to the Line of Reason, that must be discovered by sharper Lights than mine is, and by thus doing, a Conformist may plead for the Non-Conformists, and not forsake the Church. I have also thought that if the same Methods and Mediums were used for healing our Divisions, which were proposed to reconcile, or at least to cool the far greater Controversies between the Lutherans and Calvinists, by our famous and reverend Bishops, Morton, Hall, Davenant, &c. we had seen the Kingdom of Christ gone up apace, as the Temple did, without the Noice of Axes and Hammers.

I am persuaded the Divisions of the Church ly near the Hearts of some of you: and it cannot but be grievous to see into what Hands our Brethren are fallen, as given to the Spoil, and I know the Christian Saying, as I received it from credible Testimony, that my Lord of L. and C. answered a busy Extinguisher of Light, who told him, Dr. G. was preaching. He is about his Master's Work, let him alone: & again, Preaching and praying are good Works: Where there is an Antipathy against Popery, there is Moderation to Protestant Dissenters.

I humbly beseech you, Christian Gentlemen (Justices of the Peace) bear with me a Word or two. Do you think if peaceable Non-Conformity be not fit to be indulged, nor spared, will Non-Conformity and Heresy, meeting in the same Person, be indured, if it be possible to root it up? All the Disputations against Non-Conformity now, maybe strong Arguments against the Toleration of Heresy, (as our Religion is called by the Papists) and they who stretch their Power against Protestants for Non-Conformity, do justify the Roman Cruelties, and prove their Proceedings to be more rational; and you, that strive with the Flat or Back of the Sword, may be smitten with the Edge, if you can endure; and you must take it patiently, or be self-condemned.

I beseech you, Gentlemen, consider who they are that run and ride up and down upon this Work, that would take Ministers and Hearers, but such whose Sacraments are Healths, filled with Wine void of the Spirit, whose Devotions are Wounds and Dam-mees: Will these ever reform a Church, that make the World the worse? Must not that Execution of Law be thought unhappy, which is effectually the putting one of Contzen the Jesuite's Rules into Execution, (as above said) for changing of Religion, and bringing in Popery, viz. to Proceed to the Severity of Laws and Punishments against Protestants?

P O S T - S C R I P T.

I Am forced to break off abruptly in the Close of these Sheets about Union, and must leave what is behind to another Part. In the mean Time, that the Union I press for, may be more easily effected, I humbly beseech my Brethren in the Ministry, and all others, to revive the almost lost Virtue of Moderation. Consider what the excellent Dean of Canterbury says in his Preface to Bishop Wilkin's 15 Sermons, lately published; where, in Vindication of that rarely accomplished Bishop, (whose great Name, and excellent Spirit it seems could not escape a smutting from some of our Fire-brands) He thus defends both the Vertue of Moderation, and that great Example of it, to wit: And I purposely (says the Dean) mention his Moderation, and likewise adventure to commend him for it; notwithstanding that this Vertue, so much esteemed and magnified by wise Men in all Ages, hath of late been declaimed against with so much Zeal and Fierceness, and yet with that good Grace and Confidence, as if it were not only no Vertue, but even the Sum and Abridgment of all Vices: I say, notwithstanding all this, I am still of the old Opinion, that Moderation is a Vertue, and one of the peculiar Ornaments and Advantages of the excellent Constitution of our Church, and must at last be the Temper of her Members, especially the Clergy, if ever we seriously intend the firm Establishment of this Church, and do not indoltriously design, by cherishing Heats and Divisions among our selves, to let in Popery at these Breaches. But more especially consider our blessed Saviour teacheth us Moderation by his Laws concerning these Matters in Difference, by his Apostles, by his easy Yoke, his Blessings and his Judgments; and by a visible Providence over our chief City London, which should be an Example to Norwich, Bristol, Coventry, and a Warning to them. There was nothing to be done in the Year of the dreadful Plague: The Magistrate found other Work the next Year after the dreadful Fire: two Years after, the Government fell into the Hands of Sr. W. Turner, whose unsuspected Affection to the Church, made his Wisdom and Moderation the more remarkable, and the Blessing of Peace and Contentment of Mind attended. And how much happier was his Year, and of the Successors of Sir S. Sterling, than that troublesome Year to the Nonconformists, and certainly as little comfortable as it was honourable to himself. Sir Richard Ford was feared, but his eminent Prudence procured him Honour and Estimation; And what Conspiracies or Seditions were moved as much as to make him thoughtful about them? What Cause of Suspicion or Fear did the Dissenters give his honourable Successors, till the breaking out of the dreadful Plot? and did not the Lord Mayors since that, rest confident in the Loyalty and Fidelity of the Dissenters? and did not two of them concur in the Vote, against the Prosecution of them? And since the Presbyterian Sham-plots have made

made even *Hardiness and Impudence* to blush at their Confidence, what *Suspensions* have they moved to give any Colour for them? How dear was Sir *Patience Ward* to all good Men, as appeared in their publick and private Prayers for him in his dangerous Sicknes? and did not he leave his Government in a peaceable safe State? After several Years Indulgence of the Non-Conformists, did they grow troublesome by their Numbers, or factious by their Ease? And I do heartily wish the R. H. Sir *John More*, now *L. Mayor*, may leave it as he found it, and carry a Peace in his Bosom, answerable to the Piety and Moderation of his Speech at his Election, (for which I know many Prayers were made for him, by some that never saw him) that his Piety may not be outdar'd by some of

I do humbly recommend to you Mr. *Bold's* Sermon against Persecution: to which I set my Seal.

an imperious Humour, to impose upon others an impious notion, That Men cannot be Conscientious, but they must be Factious, and take Pleasure, or Pride, or something else, in representing peaceable Religion as a Torch of Rebellion. What tender Heart will be able to bear the Strings of Conscience, for touching such as fear

God, with but the Point of the Sword, for professing that same substantial Piety, by which they hope to be saved themselves. Duresce, duresce. Peace upon Israel.

The Conformist's fourth Plea for the Non-Conformists; containing (chiefly) Relations of the Sufferings of many Non-Conformists in several Parts of *England*, will be shortly published.

The Case and Cure of Persons excommunicated according to the present Law of *England*. With some friendly Advice to persons pursued in inferior Ecclesiastical Courts, by malicious promoters; both in order to their avoiding Excommunication, or delivering themselves from prisons, if imprisoned, because they have stood excommunicated fourty Days.

Mr. *Fekyl's* Sermon, intituled, *Religion makes the best Loyalty*, which was prepared for that great Assembly of Protestant Lords, Gentlemen, and Citizens, that was to meet at *St. Michael's Corn-hill* on 21 April last, to give God-thanks for the Preservation of his Majestie's Person; the Protestant Religion, and Protestant Subjects from the Popish Plot, and many Sham-plots, &c. is now published.

Sold by *Jonathan Robinson* at the Golden Lyon in *St. Paul's Church-yard*.



T H E

Conformist's Third Plea

F O R T H E

NON-CONFORMISTS.

WE may think a Suspension of Severity, and a powerful Interposition between the Threatning and the Execution, would be proper and seasonable, of great Service and Advantage; but the infinitely wise God, Saviour, and King of his Church, whose Thoughts are deep and unsearchable, may think it sufficient, that they that love him have his Promise, that all things shall work together for good to them. Let them that are instructed to know his Will, do it, and that know his Promises, believe him, and that have renounced the World, freely part with their small share in it. But to me the state of things appears dark, confused, and disconsolate; and being engaged further than I thought at first, the same Motives that prevailed with me before, prevail'd with me to go on, not from a private or factious Discontent, but to prevent, as much as I can, the horrid Sins of some, and the greivous Sufferings of others, and to discharge mine own Duty, which will bring the greatest Peace, to my now grieved, broken, and afflicted Spirit.

But to come to some special matter; give me favour to run over these four things.

- I. To represent the State of our Times.
- II. The Sufferings of the *Protestant Dissenters*.
- III. For what.
- IV. By whom they suffer.

I. We are a most sinful, and sinfully divided Generation, so broken, that none but God can keep us from falling to pieces, like a Pot-sheard broken, like a broken earthen Vessel, in which there is no pleasure. Our Reason cannot propose, nor consult Expedients to make us whole and happy, because Interests, worldly Policy, and a contemptible Art, or private Cunning to get, or save, the things that perish in their use, and by their Abuse undo and ruine the Owners, doth stir up Sedition in our Passions against our Reasons. The Gospel hath been so generally despised, that it hath not begotten in us a Faith and Love that unites to Christ, and to one another: We have not Faith enough to purify our Hearts, to overcome the World, to act as for a Crown of Glory, and a Kingdom that cannot be moved. If we believed a World to come, how little should we strive for this! If we had Love enough to cover a multitude of Sins, to forgive one another, to love as Brethren, and our Neighbour as our selves, we should not be so jealous and suspicious, nor contentious, nor selfish, as we are. One great thing is wanting, which is the Wisdom from above, described by St. James, Chap. 3. 17. *Which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, without Hypocrisy.*

There is a great Reproach cast upon the Church, and the greatest of all cast upon the Dissenters, as Dividers; but it is an ignorant or malicious Reproach, for there is nothing whole but the Church and Body of Christ: They are united to Christ, the Prince of Peace, by one Spirit, Faith and Love, and to one another by the same Bonds and Principle; Schism and Faction are from the Flesh and Devil. No sooner do Joseph and his Brethren know one another to be Brethren, but they fall upon one anothers Necks, and kiss, and weep, and repent of all their Unkindnesses, and express the dearest Love. Paul and Barnabas dissent and part, but both agree to promote the Kingdom of Christ. They that are not, and will not be reconciled to God, are the great Dividers and Breakers of the Peace; they are made up of Lusts of the Flesh, which divide and draw several ways for their Satisfaction: Whence come Wars and Fightings? come they not hence, even of your Lusts, which war in your Members? There is Dissention in the Mind, and in the Passions, between the Law in the Mind and Heart, and the Lusts of the Mind and Flesh, till the Conscience comes to be past feeling, and the Sinner falls under a reprobate Mind, and then what Confusion follows? when they call Good Evil, and Evil Good? put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes? what open Desiance is bid to God and Christ! what dissenting from, and Nonconformity to the sacred Baptifinal Covenant? the holy Rules of a Gospel-Conversation? There is a Law of Faith, of Love, of Repentance, and the Penalty is heavy upon them
that

that do not obey it; there is a Law of Righteousness, of following Peace and Holiness, without which no Man can see the Lord: Who transgress these Laws, and multitudes more? Yea, who is the Man that is guilty of all? And, what Sin so great now a days, and in all times, as Nonconformity? Who rob by the High-ways, who kill and steal, who curse and damn? who have Wo? who have Sorrow? who have Contentions? who have Babbings? who have Wounds without cause? Who have Redness of Eyes? *Nonconformists*. Who make the greatest Trouble to Justices and Magistrates? *Nonconformists*. Who fill Prisons and breake them? Who take leave of the World at Tyburn, and other Places? *Nonconformists*. Who draw Swords, send Challenges, fight Duels, and murder one another first with Wine and Drink, and then kill their dear Companions? *Nonconformists* and *Dissenters*. But now, there is a Distinction to be made, some *Dissenters* are tolerable, and some intolerable; the drunken *Nonconformist* is tolerable, he hath not only taken the Oaths, but swears: the other is a sober *Nonconformist*, and taking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, will not acquit him, and he is intolerable. The *Nonconformists* that assemble to worship God are intolerable; and thousands that worship him not at all, are too commonly let alone. But are not Malefactors punished? yes, they are, but their Crimes are against Civil Peace, or Righteousness, and not immediately for Irreligion. But the *Nonconformist Dissenters* from arbitrary and variable Impositions, are punished heavily and smartly, for religious assembling, and no other Cause, as is proved in the second Plea, and is cleared hereafter.

And upon this, the Kingdom is extreemly divided and troubled. There is a mighty Party in the Land, that build upon another, and a new Foundation, though by them called old. But Protestants agree in the same Foundations of Religion, obey the same Civil Government in the same Person, and same Fundamental, and Civil Laws; and yet some are separated for Sacrifice; the Lot is cast upon them, and great Rewards allowed to any that will do the Work. Our Parliaments from 1673, to the last, would have prevented this Ruine; but for their sakes and their own, they are now like to suffer. Our last Parliaments were chosen with less Expence, Debauchery, Tumult, or Faction, than any we have known in our days: Some had not been long in the House, but they were driven out of their former Prejudices and Prepossessions, by the clear and convincing Reasons and Debates of the House. They were generally Men of the noblest Estates in their several Counties, but acting as if they had nothing private or domestick, and applying themselves to the Preservation of the King's Sacred Person,

and of the Reformed Protestant Religion, to which they are obliged by Obligations of an everlasting Effect. Since their Dissolutions, they cannot but be sensible how their Proceedings are censured and exposed, and many, either of them, or of such as approved of them, are put out of Commission, and many that are most disaffected to them are either continued, or fill up the Vacancies; and these proceed upon contrary Reasons and Motives, and run into contrary Methods: What they would have composed and healed, these do (taking the opportunity of a long Vacancy of Parliament) discompose, with a greater Severity than at any time before. And the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists* do clear the Members of Parliament from being *Nonconformists*, or *Fanaticks*; for if they were, they should meet with the like Treatment and Usage, and so the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists* serve as a Vindication of the Parliament from the censure of being such themselves. All those noble and worthy Patriots are now the unsatisfied Spectators of an excessive Trouble and Charge, if not irrecoverable Ruine of thousands of peaceable Subjects, by which the King will never be enriched, nor the Church united. The inferior Rank are affected according to their differing measures of Reason, and Sense of Religion, and the publick Good. The more Understanding and discerning, enquire into the Cause of this Mischief, which is the dissent of the *Nonconformist's* Judgment from some unnecessary and variable Impositions, &c. when ever the Government pleaseth may be taken away without derogation of Power, or loss of any Fundamental in Religion, either of Belief or Practice, or danger to the Government or Peace: They cannot but say, these matters of Dissention need not be. They believe their own Senses, they have neither seen, nor heard of any Sedition, or Tumult, or Plot contrived among the Protestant Dissenters. They know them to be Men of Abilities, Piety, Righteousness and Peace, and have waded through the deep Waters of many Afflictions, without sinking or drowning, or overthrowing the Ship in which too many drive a Merchandize, bring in Wealth, and others fish for Men, to save them from the bottomless Pit. If they are unacquainted with the *Nonconformist* Preachers, they are acquainted with their Hearers, and know their Principles, and Conversation, and if they are, not better, they are no worse than other Men, and cannot but be grieved, that they lie at the Mercy of many that have no Vertue to commend them. They that love Godliness and Righteousness in any, in whom they believe or hope it is, that are glad for the increase of Knowledge or Godliness, by what Instrument soever, and endeavour to be merciful, as their heavenly Father is merciful, are not, and cannot be pleased with these Proceedings, of ruining Men for Conscience: These are not so subtle as to lay any great Weight upon
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the Distinctions which some Men invent to excuse the Severity. The more unknowing and unconcern'd are in a maze, wondring what kind of People these *Nonconformists* are; what kind of thing this Nonconformity is; but they know, or hear that the Men are given to pray, hear Sermons, sing Psalms, and other pious Exercises, and live, if not better, yet no worse than many that go to Church: And of these many have so much Sense, that they think and say surely, it is hard to drive honest Men's Cattel, seize their Goods, break open Houses, for doing well. And as many as love Ease and the World, take their Ease, and follow that Religion, which is encouraged with Preferment, and a Freedom from Charge and Molestation.

Some Zealots against *Nonconformists* are incensed against them, as against *Pharisees*, that pray to devour all; as against seditious Persons, and secret Traitors, that want nothing but Opportunity, as against the Authors of all our Unsettlements and Miseries. These are for the King, and who is against him? These are for the Law, as now established, and no alteration? which is to tie up the Power of the King, as much as the Parliament, for it is as much his Prerogative to abrogate old Laws when necessary, as to make new. These are for the Church of *England*, and against all that are against it; and what's that? for the Bishops; and the *Nonconformists* never did as much as petition to take them down, or diminish their Revenues: they are for preaching in Churches, and so are *Nonconformists* if they might; for Allegiance to the King, so are the *Nonconformists*; for the King's Supremacy, so are the *Nonconformists*; for Ceremonies and Orders of the Church: here they begin to disagree: And for these things can you persecute your Brethren? These Zealots are as erroneous for these things, as any others are against them. The most of our Conforming-Protestant Laicks are bound to bear Offices, higher or lower, in Cities, Towns, Hundreds, Parishes. The superiour Magistrates may forbear to break open Meetings for Religious Exercises, or set others on, much more to animate the Rabble to pluck down their Meeting-Houses; there is no Law for it, that we, the unskilful in the Laws, know, or hear of: The inferior are under Command, but these are meant of only lawful Commands, and legal Warrants. And here is now a very displeasing Tragedy to be seen. Here are Informers, very Strangers in the Countries, which they plague and molest, that swear against some Persons by hear-say, whom they do not know; and these are the great Ministers of Justice, they do little less, nay sometimes no less than expect the Justices should take their Information without Examination of them, at their time, at the very nick, when they please, and not when the Justice pleaseth: These are the Masters of the Justices themselves, who must serve them

them, or forfeit 50 *l.* to them, and 50 *l.* more to him that can get it. Some Justices are forward and officious in carrying on this *Work* of Reformation and Union, they issue forth Warrants upon them that meet, upon the Parish Officers that are slack; some give out Warrants to break open Houses for distress, some are cautious how they go so far. The dissenting Subject keeps up close, and upon his Market-day keeps his Shop shut, as if he were broken, or hid his head from Serjeants, yea, from worse Men than common Bailiffs: The Informer keeps the Street, and hath whom he pleaseth at his command. The Parish Officer is in a threefold Difficulty or Strait: 1. The Justice of Peace fines him, and threatens worse to him, if he doth not make distress. 2. It goes against his Nature and his Love to his Neighbour, Friend, Kinsman; it goes against his Conscience to distrain the Goods, and spoil the Trade, and beggar innocent Children, he cannot do it; but if he do not, he shall rue it himself; he is fined, and he is further threatned. The Informer is now *pro tempore*, his superior Officer, he must execute his Warrants. 3. He is in another Difficulty: If he break into his Neighbour's House, he is told he cannot justify it by Law, by some sage Counsellors; the owner of the House and Goods may sue him for breaking into his House: He is told he hath but one Remedy, when he is sued, the Justice will stand by him, and the Favour of the Court, and Partiality of a Jury, will be his Defender: But really, is not this an hard case, that a Man must ruine others, or be ruined? and do these Actions look as if they did really rejoyce that they are ruled by Law? when without Law, or against Law, he proceeds in hopes of Favour: And what is all this for, but to get Money for the chief Ruler, the noble Informer! the Shame and Scourge of his Country. Gentlemen and Magistrates that have Wisdom to foresee, and sense of what they see, are disquieted in their Minds; the Envious, in hope of encreasing their own Trade, are more modest than to approve it, and they who are Scorners of Religion, make merry at it. And this is a true, but imperfect face of the times; and I divulge no Secrets.

II. The Sufferings of the *Nonconformists* have been courselly and darkly opened in the two former Pleas, and will be more particularly set forth in what follows. Their former Sufferings come upon them again, and that with the Addition of more Weight and Violence; many have by an indecent Art done what they can, to shut up both his Majesties Eyes and Heart. I call it indecent, because we owe a greater Reverence to the King, they have thanked him for his ruling by Law, and declared their Adherence to the Church of *England* as established by Law: As soon as they have done this, they crave leave to execute the Laws upon

upon *Dissenters*, as if they would take the King at his Word, and while the Gracious Declaration was fresh, that there might be no room for wonted Mercy and Indulgence, except he should recede from his Royal Word, almost as soon as sent abroad ; They seem to oblige the Bishops and the Church, by declaring for it as establish'd, and thereby tied their Tongues and Pens from supplicating for their Protestant Brethren ; for if they do, they will be interpreted to act contrary to themselves, and their own Establishment ; and, no doubt but many a fair Story is told them, of I know not what invincible Machinations against them : They must look on while a Course is taken, which will reflect upon them and their Government, as much, if not more, than a tolerated Nonconformity. The more discreet, and moderate sort of Magistrates are look'd upon as favouring of Parliamentary Notions, either are left out of the Commissions of Lieutenancy and Peace, or act not at all, or act by way of Mitigation of Rigor ; the most declaredly opposite to the Parliaments, to Protestant Dissenters seem to act alone ; therefore the Law falls with multiplied Aggravations upon Preachers and People. What was argued by way of Consequence in the second Plea, proves now to be true, as if it had been a Prophecy. The *Dissenters* are fined for so many Meetings past : That there are Fines upon the Officers of one little Market-Town, for neglecting to break their Neighbours, amounting to 200 *l.* and the Fines upon one Preacher and his Hearers come to about 1000 *l.* if they may be exactly levied. What is the Case of Populous Places ! They suffer spiritually, bodily, really, and relatively : A Man cannot marry his Daughter to a Dissenting Protestant, but he is like one that throws away her Portion ; a Man cannot put a Child apprentice to a Dissenting Protestant, but he is in danger of losing his Money, and his Son of losing his Trade, by his Master's not being able to follow it, nor to hold ; many of them are in as bad a case as the Papists, if the Laws were fully executed upon them : for some Protestants are returned into the Exchequer, and their Estates under Composition, and the Parts that are left to them are liable to other Laws against them. But if the Executioners of the Laws stop at the Composition, there would be something left certain to them : But the remaining two Parts are subject to these Laws, the *Oxford* and five Mile Act, and this against Conventicles, and to the Ecclesiastical Courts besides ; they are obnoxious to Excommunications, Significavit, Writs *de Excommunicatio capiendo*, to Banishment and Abjuration, and Felony if they abjure not : Some question whether that Act of Q. E. 35. be in force, but several are brought in danger of it as if it were, besides to all manner of Taxes and Payments. They are more hardly used than Papists : Some have paid 20 *l.* and 5 *s.* over and over : But now their whole Estates will

will not satisfy the Demands of Informers and Warrants. The only way that Men of Estates have, is to become Tenants and Servants to secure them, by making them over in Trust. The Miseries of their Souls are not yet reckoned by me, to prevent which, they have ventured long by hearing such Ministers as they conceived most profitable: But now for endeavouring to flee from the Wrath to come, they are fallen under the Vengeance of cruel and merciless Informers, and to save their Souls, have brought Ruine upon their Estates.

III. And what is all this for? It is for Nonconformity; which may be considered two ways.

1. Privatively, not conforming.

2. Positively, being *Nonconformists* to the Laws of Uniformity, preaching, and holding Religious Exercises, this is the Preachers Crime; the Crime of the People is hearing, or joyning with them in such Exercises of Religion, as are without controversy necessary and profitable. This, and only this, is the cause of all those many, and great Sufferings of every kind which they have endured, and under which no man can comfortably stand without Faith, Self-denial, Contentment, and the Conscience of well-doing, and the hope of Eternal Life, the great Recompence of Reward! And this being the Cause, and the sole Cause of their Sufferings, it is such as calls for Pity and great Tendernefs, and is no just Cause of their many Molestations, and bitter Sufferings, as I intend to shew in my following Discourse, as God shall help me.

IV. By whom, and from whom, and through whose means they are now again exposed to Sufferings. I cannot shew the Spring of the Motion, but any Man may see the Hands that strike, and tell us what time of day it is: I do very much doubt whether the most engaged Instruments do know whose Work they carry on, this is my Charity; but if they do, I dare say, what they cannot hear without either great displeasure, horror or repentance. But they are,

1. Such as cannot take it ill to be called Addressers and Abhorers, but they (as far as I can look about me and see) particularly that have thanked the King for declaring his Resolutions of ruling by Law, which if any of the *Nonconformists* had expressed a doubt or fear of, had been a far greater Offence than their Nonconformity. They have declared for the Protestant Religion as established by Law, and yet punish them that profess the same, and no other.

2. And by Consequence, they are such as have declared a dislike of the Proceedings of our late Parliaments, and in that particular of endeavouring the uniting of Protestant Dissenters, in which alone I am concerned

concerned to take notice of them, and act directly contrary to the Vote of the House of Commons, which resolved, *That it is the Opinion of this House, that the Prosecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the penal Laws, is at this time grievous to the Subject, a weakening to the Protestant Interest, an Encouragement of Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom*; And by the Rule of Opposition, they must in their Opinions turn this Vote backward; as if they thought that the Prosecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the present Laws, is not grievous to the Subject, is not a weakening of the Protestant Interest, is not an encouragement of Popery, nor dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom: Certainly they must be supposed to hold this, as contrary to the general and unanimous Judgment of the far greater Number: for, as *Nemine Contradicente*, doth not contain every particular Man's Vote; so it doth no less than imply a Consent, or that to declare a Dissent is to no purpose; there is no Division of the House upon it; only if they do not hold this, contrary to the House, they must act both irrationally and desperately in this sense. Altho the House of Commons declared their Opinion to be so; yet I a Justice, or I an inferiour Officer, will prosecute the Protestant Dissenters, or execute the Penal Laws upon them, tho it be a weakening of the Protestant Interest, altho it be an Encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom. Or if this Consequence from these Proceedings be too harsh, and censorious, I will mollify it as much as it is capable of a mollified Construction: Let this be the Opinion of the Prosecutors now. The Execution of the Penal Laws, is not grievous to the Subject; that is, it is grievous but to some, and not to all: it is not grievous to the Subject, because it is not grievous to them, and then we shall have a Discrimination of Subjects; to this sense. They only, who execute the Laws, or approve of it, are the only Subjects of the King; or that the Dissenters can suffer Punishments, and the Punishments not be grievous to them. Or, that the Dissenters are not Subjects, but Rebels (a sort of quiet Rebels certainly) may we never see any other than such unarmed quiet Rebels! Again, they must think, that the Execution of the Laws upon them, is no weakening of the Protestant Interest; that is to say, they are no Protestants. And now the meaning is plain, that there are no Protestants amongst us, but those that are of the Church-Government established by Law, and are of it, or submit to it; or that read, or joyn in the Liturgy, or do all that the Law requires; that is, the Act of Uniformity, and then a Question will arise, Where was the Protestant Religion before 1662, or before the last Long-Parliament? Or, where is it like to be, when these Protestants no-Protestant-Dissenters are cut off? where it was before *Luther*.

If only the Conformists are the Protestants, then what sort of them? If only one sort of them, then the Catholick Church of *England* may be not much bigger than some great Conventicle, or great Parish. They who make this Separation of Protestants, are Separatists and Disciples, the National Tutors and Instructors, in such wholesome and profitable Doctrine, both in Divinity, and Politicks. If Conformity, *tota in toto*, &c. makes the Protestant, and be convertible with him, it makes as good a Definition of a Protestant, as of a Man by Accidents. A Man is a rational Creature, that wears curled Locks, long Hair, Hose and Shoos, &c. or of a Philosopher, he is a Scholar that wears a Beard, &c.

But to go on, they may be thought to be of Opinion, that to punish Dissenters, is no Encouragement to Popery; for when they have rooted them up, then they will root up Popery, as if they could not come at those great Oaks, before they have cut up the Brush-wood. Or lastly, they do not think it dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom, to suppress Dissenters. 1. Because they know that the Dissenters, when undone, will not molest or disturb the Peace of the Kingdom. Or else, 2. Because they intend to make them so poor, that they shall not be able to disturb the Peace. Or, 3. Because it is the only way of Peace.

But here again, a Questionist sets upon me as I go peaceably on in my Discourse. If the Dissenters are not dangerous to the Peace of Kingdom, why are they disturb'd, and their Meetings broken up as seditious Meetings?

2. If they are dangerous, and their Meetings seditious, then whether are they more dangerous, when they are pleased, quiet, and in Peace, or when they are provoked? When they enjoy Trades, Liberty, and Estates, or when they are imprisoned and undone?

To conclude this Head: If our zealous Prosecutors think, as the House of Commons did, in their foresaid Vote; then why will they act contrary to that general Opinion? or if they are of a contrary Opinion, as I have said: then follows,

3. A third Branch of the Description of the Prosecutors. They are such as do not, yea cannot understand the State of the Kingdom, and Religion so well as the House of Commons did.

1. No one Man of them can understand the true State of the Kingdom, as a Grand Assembly of our Representatives did.

2. Nor all of them: for when the Representatives of the Kingdom met, they had such Informations given in, and brought before them, and saw what was invisible to others; there was a Collection of Observations, and the Eyes of most of the Kingdom moved in that great Body, and their Debates and Reasonings were mature, and full. And tho a Vote have not the Formality and Force of an Act, yet it is
the

the first Matter and Original of an Act, out of which an Act doth arise.

3. This Vote was not of private Concernment, in which, Interest makes Men partial, but it was of Concernment to the Church and Kingdom. But many of the first movers in the Prosecution, and of the Instruments in it, act from a private Spirit, and a particular Interest, and find neither Concurrence from any, that are at liberty, and act as Free-men, nor Approbation from the Standers-by; except the few that know not what they do, and care not what others do, any more than *Gallio*.

Lastly, the inferiour sort, are Informers and Inferiour Officers, Constables, and Church-wardens, &c. of these, there is not one of many, but what abide severe Threatnings, and heavy Fines, considering their Estates, before they distrain. This way is contrary to the very common Sense of Christians, and ordinary Men. But the Informers are a select Company, whom the long Suffering of God permits for a time, of whom I will say but little in this place: They are of no good Reputation; for their Knowledge in the Country, they do not know the Names, or Persons of some of them that are molested by them; they go by report of their under-Servants or Complices; they are unknown to them that suffer by them, until they suffer: They come two or three Counties off, to set up this new Trade; whether they are Papists or (nominal) Protestants, who can tell? They never come to Church, not to their own Parish-Churches, but lie in wait and ambush. Their Estate is inviolable, their Country unknown to many; their Morals are as bad as the very Dregs of the Age. These are they that direct and rule many of the Magistrates, and live upon the spoil of better Christians and Subjects than themselves; And who go away with honest Mens Goods, honestly gotten, but they? To whom I have a great deal to say in the latter Part, if I can hold my Pen without trembling, while I write of them.

The Substance of what I intend to discourse upon, is contained in these three Heads.

- I. I will shew the Cause of the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists*.
- II. Argue for a Cessation of this forcible Course against them.
- III. Apply the whole to the Instruments of their Sufferings, whether they be Magistrates, Ministers, Informers, or others.

I. The only Cause of their Sufferings, is their Nonconformity. Of this I have spoken as fully as I thought needful at that time, both in

First Plea, from p. 14, &c. *Second Plea*, p. 10, 11. the *First Plea*; opening the hardness of their Case, in the *Second Plea*. I must reassume this Head anew, for a further Information of the World, and Amplification of the thing, in reference to their Sufferings; and lay both before the Conscience of the Christian Reader, who may propose this Case of Conscience, as rising from it, Whether the Nonconforming Christians and Protestants ought to suffer as they do, and what they do, merely for Nonconformity.

For the opening of this Point once again, I will consider Nonconformity as above-said.

1. Privatively, and passively, as not doing what the Law requires.
2. Positively and actively, as doing what the Law forbids.

1. Take Nonconformity in the first Sense, and what is it but not subscribing, or refusing to subscribe to what is required, and not declaring what is required to be declared in the Act of Uniformity? and by consequence, not doing as is required in the Act, or the Common-Prayer; here lies their Nonconformity; and hence the Name is taken.

2. They do not refuse all and every Condition therein required of them. It is not possible that I should particularly relate what Particular-Men do scruple, and stick at; some can do more than others can; but they who can do most, cannot do all required.

They are by some counted worse than Papists; looked upon as a sort of ignorant, erroneous, obstinate, unreasonable Men, seditious, and schismatical, that obey neither King, nor Bishops, nor Church; and are ignorantly, and scornfully called *These Men*, and *these kind of People*, as if they were a strange odd sort of People, wilfully bent upon their own Way, Delusions, and Fancies, as if they carried the Sparks of Rebellion, and the Seeds of Heresies, and false Doctrine in their Hearts, and kindled them in their Conventicles.

But know that they are as obedient, regular Subjects as any in the King's Dominions, save in one Defect, or Omission, which is Subscribing, Swearing, Declaring according to a particular late Act of Uniformity, and Corporation. And to them that wonder at them, that censure, condemn, and afflict them, I give this short Distinction, and Account of them.

1. The Preachers and Teachers, are Men brought up in Learning, in Schools and Universities, or in University Learning, if not in the Universities. The older sort have for the most part, taken Degrees in the Universities, were in former times ordained by Bishops, and had conformed

formed to all, or the principal things required by the old Act of Uniformity. The middle-aged among them have had the like Learned Education, and are Ministers, either ordained by Bishops, or by Presbyters, or elected and chosen by particular Congregations, and set apart for that Work by Fasting and Prayer, if not also, by Imposition of Hands. The younger sort, have Education in Learning, in Schools, Tongues, Arts and Sciences, the same that are taught in our Universities, though they are taught out of the Universities, in a more private way, and have not the Titles of Graduates in Arts and Divinity. In a word, they are (tho in different Degrees and Proportion, some more, and some less) learned, pious, painful, self-denying, able, and successful Ministers, and orderly, and peaceable Subjects according to all other Laws, as any of us are: Their Hearers are like other Men, bred up in Trades, and Callings, as other Men are, as is commonly and universally known.

In short, let them that think strangely of them, as *these Men, and these kind of Men*, receive this impartial Character of them: The *Nonconformists* are Christians, believing all the Articles of the Christian Faith; that observe whatsoever Christ commanded his Apostles to observe, and teach; that observe all the Ordinances of the Gospel, according to the general Rules of the Gospel-Worship, Government and Discipline (according to the best of their Understandings, and Prudence); that obey every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake; that are subject to Principalities and Powers; that obey Magistrates, that live by the Law of Love, and Righteousness; that have their Conversation according to the Gospel, as other Christians, or as the best of other Christians do, and that submit, observe, and obey all Laws of the Kingdom, as other Subjects do; save the aforesaid Act of Uniformity, and Subscriptions and Oaths of late Years imposed, and never before.

And this Character of them, contains matter of Answer to the many Questions, Accusations and Censures raised upon them. They are reported to be factious, fanatical, unlearned, unordained, rebellious, and unreasonable Men, disloyal, disobedient, against the King and all Government, Decency and Order, as if they were for all Sects and sorts of Religion, allowing all Men to do what seemeth good to them: But in this short Description of them, you may find an Answer to vulgar and popular Objections against them, and more fully spoken of in the two former Pleas.

In the *Second Plea*, p. 10, 11, 12. I have said, that the Difference between the *Nonconformist*, (commonly, but unduly and unjustly called *Presbyterian*) and the *Conformist*, is to be seen and gathered from the King's own Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, which they would have submitted to, if it had been turned into an Act of Parliament, and the Act of Uniformity.

I shall now further enlarge upon that Notion, and shew you what the King declared, and what they would have accepted; because many that think and speak hardly of them, do not know how things stood at that time, and what that Declaration is.

In the Year 1660, after that General *Monk* (made Duke of *Albemarle* afterwards by the King) declared himself for a Free-Parliament, and by the Counsel and Assistance of the City of *London*, restored the Members of the old Parliament, that were shut out by some of the Army, before ever they could bring about their Designs against the King's Life; and there was a wise and good Council of State chosen: many of the Royal Nobility, and Gentry, and some Divines, put out a Declaration, in which are these words.

And we do further declare, that we intend by our quiet and peaceable Behaviour, to testify our Submission to the present Power, as it now resides in the Council of State, in Expectation of the future Parliament, upon whose Wisdom and Determinations, we trust God will give such a Blessing as may produce a perfect Settlement both in Church and State. This was subscribed by the Marquess of *Dorchester*, and twenty Earls and Lords, several Noble-Men, about thirty two Baronets and Knights, and between eighty and an hundred Gentlemen, among whom is Mr. *Roger L'Estrange* (then a Christian, professing Reconciliation, promising with the rest, *To speak one Language, to be of one Name (not Whig and Tory) that all mention of Factions and Parties, and all Rancor may be thrown in and buried like Rubbish under the Foundation*: These are the words of it; but as Dr. *Collings* of *Cambridge* said once, *Then was then, and now is now*; one *Irish* Bishop subscribed it, and four Doctors of Divinity, and the first of them was Dr. *Morley*, the yet-living Lord Bishop of *Winchester*. How gladly did all honest Men receive this Declaration, as tending to a firm Reconciliation, and afterwards to a lasting Union, and universal Peace, not so much as a name of Faction or Difference to be kept in memory! neither did any suspect the meaning of burying all Factions and Animosities, like Rubbish under the Foundation, to be, as now some Mens Actions and Writings explain it, that Factions and Animosities do lie under the Foundation, which is at this day shaken, being so underlaid; Faction and Animosity will not lie buried, but rise and walk.

In April 1660, That hoped-for Parliament met; and to the Speakers of both Houses, His Majesty sent his Letter, and Declaration from his Court at *Breda*; in his Letter, I read these Words, relating to Religion. —

*His Majesties Letter
from Breda, April, 14.
1660, pag. 6.*

And nothing can be proposed to shew our Zeal and Affection for it, to which we will not readily consent; and we hope in due time, our Self to propose somewhat to you, for the Propagation of it.

In his Declaration sent therewith, are these words.

— *We do declare a Liberty to tender Consciences, and that no Man shall be disquieted, or called in question for differences of Opinion in matter of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom.* — In October 25 1666, His Majesty was pleased to send out his Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs, in which he was pleased to remember and repeat the (fore-cited) words of his Letter, whereby it is clear, that that which he had long in his Mind, to propose for the Propagation of Religion, was the Contents of this Declaration, — Adding in the next Sentence, *Pag. 4. And the truth is, We do think our Self the more competent to propose, and with God's Assistance, to determine many things now in difference, from the time we have spent, and the Experience we have had in most of the Reformed Churches abroad.* And besides what is quoted out of it in the *Second Plea*, *pag. 65.* he hath these words, *We must for the honour of all these of either Perswasion, with whom we have conferred, declare that the Professions and Desires, of all for the advancement of Piety and true Godliness are the same, their Professions of Zeal for the Peace of the Church the same; of Affection and Duty to us the same: They all approve of Episcopacy; they all approve of a set Form of Liturgy; and they all disprove and dislike the Sin of Sacriledg, and the Alienation of the Revenue of the Church; and if upon these excellent Foundations, in submission to which, there is such an Harmony of Affections, any Superstructures should be raised, to the shaking those Foundations, and to the contracting and lessening the blessed Gift of Charity, which is the vital part of Christian Religion, we shall think our selves very unfortunate.* *Pag. 8.* *We have not the least doubt, but that the Present Bishops will think the present Concessions now made by us, to allay the present Distempers, very just and reasonable, and will very cheerfully conform themselves thereto.* Thus the King declares his Confidence of the Bishops Compliance with his Proposal, and Declaration, which is thus contracted.

1. *Our purpose is to promote the Power of Godliness, to encourage the Exercise of Religion, both publick and private; that the Lord's day be applied to holy Exercises; that insufficient, negligent, and scandalous Ministers be not permitted in the Church; to prefer none to be Bishops, but Men of Learning, Vertue and Piety, that they be frequent Preachers, &c.*

2. *Because the Diocesses are too large, we will appoint Suffragan Bishops, for the due performance of the Work.*

3. *No Bishops shall ordain or exercise any Jurisdiction without Advice of the Presbyters; no Chancellour or Commissary shall decree any Excommunication or Absolution; nor shall the Deacons exercise any Jurisdiction without the Advice and Assistance of six Ministers.*

4. *That (Cathedral) Preferments shall be given to the most learned, and pious Presbyters of the Diocess; and that an equal number (to those*

‘ those of the Chapter) of the ablest Presbyters, of the Diocess annually chosen by the major Vote of the Presbyters, shall be always advising and assisting with those of the Chapter, in all Ordinations, and every part of Jurisdiction and Censures.

‘ 5. That Confirmation be solemnly performed, by the Information and Consent of the Minister of the place ; who shall admit none to the Lord’s Supper, till they make a credible Profession of their Faith ; Care be taken to instruct and reform the scandalous, whom the Minister shall not receive to the Lord’s Supper, till they have openly declared their Repentance. The rural Dean, with three or four Ministers of the Deanary, chosen by Ministers of the Deanary, shall meet once a Month, to receive Complaints and Presentments, to compose Differences, reform things amiss by Admonitions, and to present such things to the Bishop, as cannot be reformed by their pastoral Perswasions ; to see that all the younger sort be carefully instructed, before they be confirmed.

‘ 6. No Bishop shall exercise any Arbitrary Power.

‘ 7. — Since we find some Exceptions made against several things in the Liturgy ; we will appoint an equal number of Divines of both Perswasions, to review the same, and to make such Alterations, as shall be thought most necessary, and some additional Forms, and it shall be left to the Minister to chuse one or other. In the mean time, we desire that Ministers would read those parts, against which there lies no Exceptions ; yet in compassion to them that scruple it, our Will and Pleasure is, that none be punished or troubled for not using it, until it be effectually reformed, as aforesaid.

‘ 8. We gratify those who are grieved with the use of some Ceremonies, by indulging to, and dispensing with their omitting those Ceremonies : and leave all Decisions about them, to the Advice of a National Synod.

‘ None shall be denied the Lord’s Supper for not kneeling ; none compelled to use the Cross, it shall be lawful to him that desires to use the Cross, to have such Ministers as will use it ; and if the proper Minister refuse to omit it, the Parent shall get another Minister that will, to baptize his Child. None compell’d to bow at the Name of Jesus. The Surplice left to liberty, except the Royal Chappel, Cathedral Churches, or Colledges in Universities. Those that cannot subscribe the Canon, and take the Oath of Canonical Obedience, shall only take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy ; that none forfeit his Benefice, that subscribes all the Articles of Religion, which only concern the Confession of the true Christian Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments. He repeated again his Declaration of Liberty of Conscience before cited ; — And concludes

‘conclude, and in this place to explain what we mentioned before, That
 ‘we hoped in due time, to propose somewhat for the Propagation of the
 ‘Protestant Religion, that will satisfy the World, that we have, always
 ‘made it both our Care and our Study, and have observed enough, what
 ‘is most like to bring Disadvantage to it. We do conjure all our loving
 Subjects to acquiesce, and submit to this our Declaration, concerning those
 Differences which have so much disquieted the Nation at home, and
 given so much Offence to the Protestant Churches abroad, &c.

The Parliament which restored the King, then sitting, thanked him
 for this Declaration; the Divines of London, called the Presbyterian, did
 also thank him for it: and I never was acquainted with any conforming
 Divine, that did not approve of it, more than of the exact Conformity
 afterwards required; and I cannot but think, if a Scrutiny were to be
 made, but more Ministers of Learning, Piety, and Experience; that are
 not biased with Preferments, would judge it a far better Expedient for
 our Peace, and the Propagation of the Protestant Religion (as his
 Majesty speaks) than our tried Strictness and Rigor; yea, I doubt
 not but many of our considerable dignified Clergy, are, or would be, of
 the same mind.

After this, the King gave a Commission according to his Declaration,
 to an equal number of Divines, to review, and reform the Common-
 Prayer. The Presbyterian Divines (as they were called) presented
 their Exceptions to the Bishops and Commissioners, who returned them
 an Answer, not favouring of fatherly Condescension, nor giving hopes
 of a desirable Closure, not as much as to leave the use of a Ceremony at li-
 berty and free; and by the stile it seems to be written by one or more
 of the Doctors, and not by the Bishops themselves. To this the other
 Commissioners replied, which was not thought worth their notice, so
 much as to give them another gentle Rebuke.

When the four Months, allowed for the Debates and Consultation,
 were expired, the Commissioners, who were slighted, present a Petition
 and due Account of the matter to the King, and say thus. ‘And tho
 ‘the Account which we are forced to give to your Majesty, of the Issue
 ‘of our Consultation, is, that no Agreements are subscribed by us, to
 ‘be offerered to your Majesty according to your Expectation; and tho
 ‘it be none of our intent to cast the least unmeet Reflection upon the
 ‘Right Reverend Bishops, and learned Brethren, who think not meet
 ‘to yield to any considerable Alterations, to the Ends expressed in your
 ‘Majesties Commission, yet we must say it is some quiet to our Minds, that
 ‘we have not been guilty of your Majesties and Subjects Disappoint-
 ‘ments, and that we account not your Majesties Gracious Commission,
 ‘and our Labour lost, having Peace of Conscience in discharge of our

‘Duty to God and you, that we have been the Seekers and Followers of Peace, and have earnestly pleaded, and humbly petitioned for it. And we humbly beseech your Majesty to believe that we own no Principles of Faction or Disobedience, nor patronize the Errors and Obstinacy of any. — It is the desire of our Souls to contribute our Parts and Interest to the uttermost, for the promoting of Holiness, Charity, Unity, and Obedience to Rulers in all lawful things; but if we should sit again God, because we are commanded, who shall answer for us, or save us from his Justice? — And we know that conscientious Men will not consent to the practising of things, in their Judgment unlawful, when *those may yield who count the matter indifferent*—. We must not believe that when your Majesty took our Consent to a Liturgy, to be a Foundation that would infer our Concord, you meant not, we should have no Concord, but by consenting to this Liturgy, without any considerable Alteration —. We most humbly beseech your Majesty, that the benefit of the said Declaration, may be continued to your People, and in particular, that none be punished or troubled for not using the Common-Prayer, till it be effectually reformed, and the Addition made as these express.

They presented to the Bishops and the other Commissioners the Reformation of the Liturgy, and a most humble, grave, pathetical Petition, called the Petition for Peace; towards the end, they address themselves to them in these Words, *Grant us but the Freedom which Christ and his Apostles left unto the Churches; use necessary things as necessary, and unnecessary things as unnecessary; and charitably bear with the Infirmities of the weak, and tolerate the tolerable while they live peaceably, and then you will know when you have done; and for the Intolerable, we beg not your Toleration, &c.*

I am sensible I have been long upon this historical Retrospect of these Passages, to inform those who seem not to know, or remember these things; Yet I cannot go on without leaving some Animadversions and Remarks upon them.

1. We might have seen the disagreeing Parties running into an Union under the King, as their supream lawful Head and Governour. The reputed *Presbyterian* comprehending a great, powerful, considerate, substantial part of the Kingdom, most close and deliberate in Counsel, active in Endeavours, fervent in Prayer with their Ministers for the Restauration of the King and the ancient Government, watching all Opportunities, and using all means to engage General *Monk*, and his well disciplined, and most *Presbyterian* part of the Army, to declare for the restoring the secluded Members in order to a free Parliament, and that in order to bring back the King. The most eminent of the Royal Party, declaring a Reconcilableness, and Oblivion of all Sufferings, acknow-

acknowledging the Hand of God in them all. And the King to compleat and perfect all, by laying a Top-stone, as well as the Foundation of the Temple of Peace, gathers all Parties into himself; some by Comprehension in a wider Constitution, others by a safe indulgent Toleration, which if granted, had been desired by the least and most inconsiderable part of the Nation; for the Dissenters had been fewer than now they are, because abundance had been taken into the proposed Settlement: The Sects have much encreased, since that time of Papists, if not other Denominations—. The King and his wise Council had a perfect full view of all Interests, and did weigh out proper Preparatives for an healing Effect.

2. It is a Shame and Grief to think that a divided Nation can be sooner composd and settled, than a broken divided Church, who have, besides the Motives and Principles of Nature, the most gracious Reconciler for their Law-giver, the most perfect Laws of Love, the most indulgent Government, under the strict and indispenfible Duty of Self-denial, opposite to Self-seeking, and should have the least Consideration and Regard of a wordly Interest, because, *They that are of Christ, they are not of this World*; and having nothing to do but to promote, enlarge, and build up Christ's Kingdom upon Earth, and for all their Self-denial, Services, and Sufferings, have the Promises of Eternal Life, an everlasting Kingdom, and Thrones in it. It is a most afflicting Meditation, that Church-Divisions are most difficultly healed. What an humbling Thought is this! that a temporal Interest divides wordly Men, in whom Self prevails, and yet wordly Men can unite under general Common Laws, because it is their Interest to unite; and yet they, who of all Men are under the greatest Obligations to unite, that declare they are not of this World, that teach the way of Peace to others, cannot find it themselves! But it is not Religion, and Light, that divide, but it is Darknes, and the Spirit of this World. If to us to live were Christ, then Christian Faith and Love, would make us more heavenly, and by Consequence, more united. Popery could never have that Compass to work our Ruine in, had we agreed as we should have done: Pardon this Excursion; I'll return. The Church is rent from the Top to the Bottom, the King surveys it, and hath a Proposal in his Mind, which will not only repair the Breaches, *but propagate Religion*, as he often said; he seems to be fond of it, he speaks so often of it. It was meditated, and formed in his Royal Mind while he was in *Breda*; that it may not be thought an hasty and immature Production, he gives it full time, and cherisheth it. And what is it but his Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs! It was beheld, as the most Royal Issue of an happy Mind, as the First-born of Church-Peace, after the most affectionate Conjunction

of a most well-come King to a Kingdom that longed for him!

Observe, 1. He offers himself as an Umpire and Reconciler!

2. He declares, to his great Satisfaction and Comfort, that while he was in *Holland*, he found the principal Assertors of the Presbyterian Opinion, full of Affection to him, Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, neither Enemies to Episcopacy nor Liturgy, but modestly desiring Alterations without shaking Foundations; and to the same purpose over again, *pag.* 8.

3. He thinks himself to be competent to make his Proposal, and determine many things in difference, as above-said, and *pag.* 4. of the Declaration.

4. He expressed some great Confidence in the Bishops: *We have not the least doubt*, but that the present Bishops will think the present Concessions made by us to allay the present Distempers, very just and reasonable, and will very chearfully conform themselves thereto, *pag.* 10.

5. He conjured all his loving Subjects to acquiesce in, and submit to that his Declaration concerning those Differences, *pag.* 18, 19.

3dly, You have read the King's Character of the Reforming Divines (so I'll call them, rather than Presbyterian) and they made it good, they strictly followed the Orders in the King's Commission, made their Exceptions, which they were impowered to do, explained, and shewed the Reasonableness of them; when answered, they replied; when called to dispute, they disputed; and when they saw all was but dashing against a Wall, they petition for Peace, both the King and Bishops.

Now to all them that speak slightly or scornfully; *These Men, these kind of Men*; as if they were some Monsters rolling in a troubled Sea, and not suffering the Ark of Christ's Church to rest, here is some account, if not Satisfaction, given.

But after our great hopes of Church-Peace and Union, what followed but a dismal Breach? a Wound that lies a bleeding! and they upon whom the Pinacles of the Temple fell, and bruised and crushed, are now instead of a cleanly Hospital to live in, threatened with *Bridewel*, and *Prisons*, and with that dreadful Sentence of Abjuration. And Christian Reader, if you do as I do, here Grief doth make you stop. That any Magistrate that hath taken the Sacrament to prove himself a Protestant, dare menace, or admonish any Christian Minister to do what he cannot do, or forswear his native Country! And woe be to *England*, when a Minister of Christ, successful in his Work, not imaginary but real, shall be carried to the Sea-side, and swear he will never return to his Native Country; and that such Ministers shall not have as much as a mean House or Barn to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in!

But

But who made the Breach? who hindered the hopeful Closure? self-willed, obstinate *Nonconformists*? The Nonconformity to the Law of Love, Peace, Meekness, Forbearance, hath done the Mischief. The King's Declaration would have done what the Act of Uniformity could not do, but we may look, and find the first Cause to lie between them both.

To lay this open, compare but some words in the King's Commission, with some of the Answers of the Anti-reforming Commissioners, and then judge impartially.

The King according to his Declaration, gave his Commission to an equal number of Divines of both Perswasions, bearing date *March 25*, in the thirteenth Year of his Reign.

We in the Accomplishment of our said Will and Intent, — do authorize you — to advise upon, and review the said Book of Common Prayer, comparing it with the most ancient Liturgies of the purest Times, — to take to your serious Consideration, the several Directions, Rules, Forms of Prayer, and things in the Book of Common-Prayer contained, to advise, consult upon and about the same, and the several Objections and Exceptions, which shall now be raised against the same; and, if occasion be, to make such reasonable and necessary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments therein, — as shall be agreed upon to be needful and expedient, for the giving Satisfaction to tender Consciences, &c.

The Bishops, &c. answer, 'On the contrary we judge, That if the Liturgy should be altered, as is there required, not only a Multitude, but the Generality of the soberest and most Loyal Children of the Church of *England* would justly be offended, since such an Alteration would be a virtual Concession, that this Liturgy was an intolerable Burthen to tender Consciences, a direct Cause of Schism, a superstitious Usage (upon which Pretences it is here desired to be altered) which would at once justify all those who have obstinately separated from it, as the only pious, tender-conscienced Men, and condemn all those that have adhered to it, in conscience of their Duty and Loyalty, with the loss and hazards of their Estates, and Fortunes, as Men superstitious, schismatical, and void of Religion and Conscience. For these Reasons and those that follow, we cannot consent to such an Alteration as is desired, till these Pretences be proved.

And now it might easily appear to them, what afterwards came to pass; but let us observe:

1. There is no doubt but some of them knew what his Majesties Proposal was, for the Propagation of the Protestant Religion; being his Chaplains and chief Ministers about him, and some of them (if I am not mis-informed) made some Alterations and Amendments in the King's Declaration.

2. They do manifest an Opinion of the Reforming Divines, inconsistent with the Character which his Majesty gave of them, *as grave and learned Ministers*; and proceed with them according to a mean and uncharitable Opinion.

3. If they saw no necessity of any Alterations: 1. They dissented from the Judgment of as eminent Divines of the Church, as any in it. 2. They do not agree among themselves; for Mr. *Thorndike*, one of them, thought a Reformation was necessary to Union.

3. They made some Alterations, such as were pleasing to them, though not satisfactory to others. 4. They destroy the King's Supposition, and the reason of his Proposal, for the Propagation of the Protestant Religion, Peace of the Church, satisfying tender Consciences, &c.

4. If they were *commissioned to advise*, &c. then had it not been a great Satisfaction to the whole Church, and an effectual way to silence the cavilling Opponents (if they were but Cavillers)? 1. To have answered their Reply. 2. to have petitioned his Majesty for a longer time, to have heard them out, but when eight Points were to be disputed, they had only time for one of them, being the last day of their

If I am misl. & in any of these things, as I believe I am not, I shall be glad to be corrected by a true History of those Passages.

the People kneeling; as if the sense were, we are to give the Sacrament into the hands of the

Now Lord Bishops of Ely, Chester, Norwich.

See Mr. B's Defence against Mr. Cheney, pag. 38.

Commission. It was about giving the Sacrament to Persons that scruple kneeling; about which there was a Division among themselves: Some of them held that we are not to refuse to give it to them that kneel not, but to give it to them that kneel: the words of the Rubrick being,—*The Minister shall take in both kinds himself,—and deliver it into the hands of* the People kneeling; but are not forbid to give it to them that do not kneel: Dr. G. Dr. P. and Dr. S. were for this lax Interpretation; others Dr. M. now Bishop of Winchester, was for the rigid sense, that the People must kneel, or we must not give it. And Dr. P. now Dean of Salisbury, offered to maintain against Mr. Baxter, that it was an Act of Mercy to those that scruple and refused to receive the Sacrament kneeling, to deny them the Communion of the Church therein; but the Commissioners of
his

his own side restrained him. 4. How little did some of them care for the King's conjuring them, to acquiesce in, and submit to his Declaration? Or, tho his Majesty thought himself competent to propose (a Remedy) they thought him not, or else they would have advised a little further, having so great a charge from him, giving him hopes of their Compliance, and seeing the Peace and Settlement of the Church so much concerned in it, and the House of Commons approving of it, to whom they owed an Acknowledgment for their Service done for them, they might have made their Memorial blessed to all Generations, as Healers and Peace-makers.

And now it is plain that those who ruled most in those Councils, exercised a kind of Sovereignty over the Reason of all others, and waited for a Parliament and Convocation that should at once silence Objections, and answer Petitions.

Since those Transactions, the reforming Divines never had but one or two Opportunities of treating and composing our doleful Differences; the Composers agreed; but the House of Commons hearing of it, voted against bringing in a Bill of Comprehension, and the Reverend Dr. Burnet, in the Life of the Great Sir Matthew Hale, gives us the Reasons that prevailed at that time against it. And if I may not be too tedious, I will crave leave to transcribe his Lines.

But two Parties appeared vigorously against this Design (of Comprehension by Law) the one was of some zealous Clergy-Men, who thought it below the Dignity of the Church to alter Laws, and change Settlements for the sake of some, whom they esteemed Schismatics; they also believed it was better to keep them out of the Church, than bring them into it, since a Faction upon that would arise in the Church, which they thought might be more dangerous than the Schism it self was. Besides, they said, if some things were now to be changed in compliance with the Humor of a Party, as soon as that was done, another Party might demand other Concessions, and there might be as good Reasons invented for these as for those; many such Concessions might also shake those of our own Communion, and tempt them to forsake us, and go over to the Church of Rome, pretending that we changed so often, that they were thereby inclined to be of a Church that was constant and true to her self; and these Reasons wrought on the far greater part of the House of Commons —. There were others that opposed it upon very different Ends: They designed to shelter the Papists from the Execution of the Law, and saw clearly that nothing would bring in Popery so well as a Toleration; but to tolerate Popery bare-faced, would have startled the Nation too much, so it was necessary to hinder all the Propositions for Union, seeing the keeping up the Differences was the best colour they could find, for getting the Toleration to pass, only as slackening the Laws against Dissenters, whose Numbers and Wealth

made it adviseable to have some regard to them; and under this pretence Popery might have crept in more covered, and less regarded: so these Councils being more acceptable to some concealed Papists than in Power, as has since appeared too evidently, the whole Project for Comprehension was let fall, and those who had set it afoot, came to be looked on with an evil Eye, as secret Favourers of Dissenters, Underminers of the Church, and every thing else that Jealousy and Distaste could cast on them.

I do not question but this excellent Historian hath given us a faithful account of the Reasons against Comprehension, as he received them from those eminent Persons engaged in it, or some that knew them; and I will make bold to cast some Reflections upon them.

1. On the one part some zealous Church-men, who thought it below the Dignity of the Church to alter Laws, &c. But when it is more agreeable to their Spirit and Ends, it is no Indignity to change moderate Laws into more severe; nor, to practise arbitrarily beyond Laws.

2. They who rationally and conscienciously dissent, are esteemed Schismatics: but retaining all other their Opinions and Principles, and abating the rigor of their Dissent, by conforming, would they be of the Church, or still esteemed Schismatics? By this Notion, the Conformist, *qua talis*, is no Schismatick; and the Nonconformist, *quatenus* such, is a Schismatick. Conformity takes away all name of Schism: But then the Question might be, Whether the *Nonconformist* be a State-schismatick, or a Church-schismatick? and, whether he was a Schismatick, when he treated about, and petitioned for Peace and Union? and what hath made him to be one since?

3. They are afraid of Faction: but do those Fears arise from a Catholick or a Factious Spirit? Are there not factious Spirits in the Church, that harbour factious Affections, and utter factious Words, contrary to true Charity?

4. And what if other Parties might demand Concessions? Either those Concessions were rational, becoming the Wisdom, Peaceableness, and Grace of the Church, or not; methinks it's a Royal Dignity in the Church, to make reasonable Concessions: if they are unreasonable, unchristian, impious and the like, the Church may deny them with Honour. But these Sons and Fathers, represent the Church like a stately Lady that keeps Chamber, and must not be spoken to.

5. But really, are there such among us, as taking Offence, might go over to the Church of *Rome*, constant and true to her self? How much do they owe to the *Nonconformists* for their Company and Communion! How inclinable are they to *Rome*, that are ready to depart upon small Concessions! The Constancy of the Church of *Rome*, is as inseparable a

Property

Property of hers, as her Infallibility. Methinks this is much to the Dishonour of many of our Church, and much to the Honour of the *Nonconformists*, that whatever they suffer, there is no danger that they will turn Papists: But weak Reasons have great force in them, when they that are narrow in their Charity, and powerful in Place, have the Management of them.

6. The World is too apt to be jealous; but have not the *Nonconformists* some Reason to be jealous of this sort of zealous Clergy-men, that there is some Agreement, or Bargain between them and the Friends and Kinsmen of the Church of *Rome*? that both shall agree to keep the *Nonconformists* out? And is not the Church of *Rome* better conditioned, and better natured than these zealous Clergy-men? for there is not a *Nonconformist* but may be entertained among them, without fear of encreasing a Faction.

7. It is not a very doubtful thing, whether our zealous Clergy-men are the best or the worst sort of our Clergy, that argue so stilly against a legal Comprehension of the Orthodox *Nonconformists*, with Reasons of so little weight, or that are so little sensible of the Usefulness, and Serviceableness of the Abilities of the *Nonconformists*, to the great and crying need of Souls.

8. This is a Vindication of the *Nonconformists* from bringing in of Popery; for the way of getting into the Papists hath been the shutting out of them; they hope to get by a Toleration. There would be no colourable Reasons for a Toleration, if it were not a pretended Favour to the *Nonconformists*. Take away Nonconformity as much as you can, and you take away the fairest pretence for a Toleration. They that appear against the uniting of Protestants upon Catholick Terms, serve the Popish Turn and Interest, and are effectually ill Friends to the Protestant Interest, and by Consequence our excluding Impositions do more real Hurt than Good, to the Protestant Church of *England*.

9. The dissenting Protestants may know who are their Friends, and who their Enemies, and what Potent Enemies they have, they have the Zealous Clergy against them, and the Politick Potent Papist.

10. We see the little Confidence or Assurance we have of the Constancy of many that are in the Communion of the Church of *England*; for if the receiving of the Protestant Dissenters upon Catholick Terms, be hazardous of losing, or of the revolt of them to the Church of *Rome*, as the more constant and true to her self, then what will become of them, if Popery should so far obtain, as to be able to give them Countenance and Favour? for if they are so inclinable to revolt for the Condescensions of the Church, in some things extra-essential to the Church,

upon shew of Inconstancy; what would they be, when our Church is like to be lost, or supprest?

11. Whether there is not a latent untrusty Party of schismatical Formalists in the Church, that are Schismatics *deposivè*? for it seems they cannot bear the Reconciliation, and Restitution of the ejected; and if they are upon that in danger of apostatizing to the Church of *Rome*, are they not in danger of becoming the rankest Schismatics in the World, by returning Members of an apostate, schismatical Church, the Mother of Schisms?

12. By this, among other Reasons, I am convinced that it is the Duty of all sound and sincere Protestants of the Church of *England*, to pray for and by all peaceable ways to endeavour the re-admission of all sound Protestant Dissenters, and a Catholick Union of us all. And I am convinced the *learned Bishop Cosins* saw the State of Religion, when he declared in his last Testament, that it was the great Duty of us all to unite. And how much we are bound to acknowledg, and with all due Honour to remember the Loyal and Christian Endcavours of our late Parliaments, to unite us. I did at first design to compare the foresaid Declaration, to which, if turned into an Act, the *Nonconformists* would have conformed; and the Act of Uniformity to which they cannot conform, for a further Illustration of the despised Case of the *Nonconformists*; but I hope there is enough spoken to inform the less knowing, and to confirm the more knowing, in their charitable Opinion of them. I have traced the divided Rivers to the Head of them; and for that reason, that Truth may appear. From all this you may see a Concord between the King proposing, and the House of Commons, by their Thanks, approving of it; and the major part of the *Nonconformists* ready to submit to it. On the other side, you see the Bishops and Doctors dissenting from the King and Commons (that restored them) and the reforming Divines, and not so concordant in their Sentiments and Opinions, as to denominate them unanimous, and could they have extended their Charity but wide enough, they had provided well for a more durable Peace, defended with Considerations, against which, but few would have drawn out the small Powers of their Mis-understandings, to give trouble to it. There was not an exact Uniformity in their Notions; some thought a Reformation necessary to the Church's Settlement: Mr. *Thorndike* wrote for it; and when the Commissioners on both sides, began to dispute, it was seasonably closed up; lest the Disagreements of the anti-reforming-side had more appeared; some of whom undertook the Conduct of others, under whom a Promoter of their Design, the Lord Chancellor *Hide*, appeared and acted, (who in the Year 1641, was Chair-man of the Committee against the Bishops;)

others.

others gave Reputation, but little Addition of Help ; others were variously instrumental, some by their Learning, others with their eagerness, and others with their keen and inveterate Antipathy against some, if not all of the reforming side, and differed in as many Points from the Doctrine of the Church, as the *Nonconformists* differed from the Discipline and Ceremonies of the Church, and were doctrinal *Nonconformists*. And it is clear, that they did not humbly and brotherly advise, nor maturely debate the matters committed to them, and not doubting of an hopeful manageable Number of the succeeding Parliament, their Resolutions passed into an Act, they took no more notice of the King's Declaration, than to make an historical mention of it, that such a thing had been, but enact nothing commended by it, in mitigation or favour to the Dissenting-side, requiring more Conditions, and adding heavy Penalties, which that Parliament in the latter times of it would have abated ; but it was too late, as was said else-where. This is the Act to which the *Nonconformists* cannot conform ; and they have given such Reasons, and so many, for this passive Nonconformity, that as many good Men as I know, are sorry they have so much to say, and their disgusted Adversaries are displeased and incensed with them, and no Man is thought yet to give a full and sufficient Answer to them, being rather slighted than answered ; or what the one takes in a strict and honest sense, the other is fain to expound in a very general, and well-meaning sense ; according to one, more may conform than yet have conformed, according to the other, there are but few, if any, that have conformed, in my acquaintance. This being in part spoken to in the *First Plea*, I cannot stay any longer upon this Head, but pass to the other Consideration of Nonconformity.

2. Nonconformity taken *actively and positively* ; and that is preaching and performing other Religious Exercises, as it is commonly said, contrary to Law, by forbidden Men, and in a disallowed way. And for this several Nonconformist Ministers are at this time hunted, molested, and admonished, according to the strictest Form of Law, in order to Banishment with Abjuration, or to be prosecuted as Felons ; in case of their Obstinacy and Refusal : Some of them have apologized for their preaching in such a manner, that if they are not answered in a rational, peaceable convincing way, they will not be used as rational Men, and their Sufferings will be the more harsh, but not more hard to be born by them, because they have given Reasons for their Actions, which will appear to them either unanswerable, and that will make their Sufferings more comfortable ; or else their Oppressors are the more implacable, and then they must the more meekly acquiesce in the divine Pleasure, as called forth to suffer. The Reverend Mr. *Baxter* hath written an Apology

for the Nonconformist Ministry, dedicated to six of the Right Reverend Bishops, by Name, and a Petition, which deserves the serious perusal of their Lordships, and all other Ministers, Magistrates, and Gentlemen, that they may either satisfy them, or be satisfied by them. The Case is momentous, because the Salvation of Souls, the many personal and real Sufferings of Men in Bodies and Estates, the healing of Divisions, and settling of the Church, are unconceivably touched, and concerned in it: Mr. *John Troughton* hath written a Book with the same Title, upon the same Argument. And altho the Right Reverend Bishop of *Cork* hath done well in dealing faithfully with Mr. *B.* he did ill in not dealing fairly with that Book, and worse in exposing him as incapable, unfit to propose Terms of Peace; by which I think, that Excellent Bishop hath not seen his *Terms of Concord*, 2d part.

And this being stated, let us modelly consider :

1. Whether this their positive Nonconformity be not capable of an Apology ?

2. Whether it be not an hard case to silence, suppress, and punish them for endeavouring the Good of precious Souls ?

For the first ;

1. No Christian should doubt that the Office of the Ministry is originally from Jesus Christ, and not of Men. The extraordinary and ordinary Office of the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments are derived from the same Divine Supreme Authority. He that made the Apostles

able Ministers of the New-Testament, hath made, and makes all other lawful, fitted, and faithful Ministers, Ministers of the New-Testament ; it is their Gift, and their Learning, their Office and Work, to declare and publish that New-Testament, or Covenant of Grace, the Commands, Conditions, Privileges, and Promises of it, to call and invite Sinners to it, to accept of the Grace therein revealed, to submit to the Commands of it, perform the Conditions and Duties required, to make them thereby capable of the Privileges and Promises annexed to it, and to train up, edify, build, comfort, and perfect all that are in it. This is an Office necessary, useful and proper to his Kingdom.

Qui fecit nos idoneos Ministros N.T. quomodo fecit ? per Spiritum suum tanquam per Principium effectivum ; per Gratiam Spiritus tanquam per principium formale ; E. i. c. Davananius in *cap. 1. ad Coloss.* v. 29.

2. They who are called and sent by Christ, and according to his Mind, are qualified, prepared and instructed for their Work and Office, by the Holy Ghost, who was promised and sent by Jesus Christ.

3. Being in some lower measure at first prepared and fitted for their Work ; the Holy Ghost is the prime, and effectual *Mover* of them to exercise those

those Gifts which they have received in the Service of their Master in Heaven, Jesus Christ. And this that great and solemn Interrogatory, which requires a sincere, sensible, solemn, and serious Answer, our Ordination doth put out of doubt. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, *The ordering of* to take upon you this Office, &c? *Ansiv. I Deacons.* trust so.

4. Being prepared and moved by the Holy Ghost, they offer themselves unto, and are called by some in a Church (where a Church is constituted) to exercise those Abilities, received from Christ by the Holy Spirit, for the Ends of the Gospel, the Salvation of immortal Souls.

5. All that the Bishops and Pastors of the Church are required to do, or can do as Ordainers, is, to try their Fitness and Disposition, and finding them fit, to approve and separate them to the Office of the Ministry, to declare them to have Authority, to exhort them to Diligence and Faithfulness in their Office, and to testify this to the Church.

6. No Bishop or Pastors can justly refuse, and justify the refusal before Jesus Christ, to whom they must give an account, of any Person duly qualified with necessary Qualifications for the Ministry; for it is a Sin to refuse him, whom Christ hath by his Spirit fitted for, and excited to his Work by his Spirit.

7. As long as their Gifts and Abilities are continued, and the Holy Ghost doth continue his gracious Motions and Assistances, so long these Ministers must continue in the Exercise, and discharge of their Office; for there is the same Reason to continue them, as there was to admit them, they continuing the same.

8. Their fitness for the Work of the Ministry consisting in soundness of Knowledge and Faith, aptness to teach, gift of Utterance, declared Resolutions, and undertaking to teach and do what Christ hath commanded, with Perseverance therein, as a Guide and Example to the Flock, are sufficient Conditions of admittance into the Ministry of the Gospel. To do all things decently and in order, and to Edification, are necessary by the Law of Christ's Kingdom, and not indifferent. It may well be questioned, whether any Man otherwise fitted for the Ministry, should be refused, because he refuseth to subscribe, vow, promise, declare, to any doubtful, controverted Conditions of Admission or Continuance; which are commonly invented by controversial, contentious, and imperious Men, who do not only propose their Conceptions to others, but make them a Standard and Measure to regulate other Mens Minds, and Practices; and not only so, but think it meet, that all shall be punished that disagree, and dissent from them.

For the Confirmation of these things, with the Authority of the Church of *England*; Let us observe the Form of ordering Priests and Deacons: The *Preface* saith, 'The Bishop knowing either by himself, 'or by sufficient Testimony any Person to be of vertuous Conversation, 'and without Crime, and after Examination and Trial, finding him 'learned in the Latine Tongue, and sufficiently instructed in Holy Scrip- 'ture, may — admit him Deacon—. The Bishop saith to the Arch- 'Deacon, Take heed that the Persons, whom you present unto us, be 'apt and meet for their Learning, and Godly Conversation—. The 'Bishop examines them in the presence of all the People — Do you 'trust you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this 'Office — ? Do you think you are truly called according to the Will 'of our Lord Jesus Christ — ? Do you unfeignedly believe all the Cano- 'nical Scripture of the Old and New Testament? Then opening his 'Office, he asks him, Will you do this gladly and willingly? Will you 'apply your Diligence to frame and fashion your own Lives, and of 'your Families, according to the Doctrine of Christ, and be Examples 'of the Flock of Christ — ? The other Question relates to the Govern- ment of this Church, as Obedience to the Ordinary, and his godly Ad- monitions, which is a local Condition, in order to their Admission under our Church-form of Government, which is disputed by some of the Parties when any is presented to the Priest-hood: The Bishop cautions the Arch-Deacon; 'Take heed that the Persons whom you present un- 'to us, be apt and meet, for their Learning and godly Conversation, 'to exercise their Ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edify- 'ing his Church —. I think them so to be: Then shall the Bishop say 'unto the People, Good People, these are they whom we purpose, 'God willing, to receive this day unto the Holy Office of Priest-hood; 'for after due Examination we find not to the contrary, but that they 'be lawfully called to their Function and Ministry, and that they be 'Persons meet for the same.

Note from this, that Learning and Godly Conversation are the constituting Qualifications of a Man lawfully called to the Function of the Ministry.

In the Collect afterwards, they pray God to replenish them with the 'Truth of his Doctrine, adorn them with Innocency of Life, that both 'by Word and good Example, they may faithfully serve him in this 'Office, &c. Then follow the Epistle and Gospel; after which the 'Oath of Supremacy is given, and after that, an Exhortation to remem- 'ber their high Dignity, and weight of their Charge, *i. e.* to be Messen- 'gers, Watchmen, Stewards of the Lord, to teach, premonish, feed, 'provide for the Lord's Family, to seek Christ's Sheep that are dispersed abroad,

‘ abroad, and for his Children, who are in the midst of this naughty
 ‘ World, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Have always
 ‘ printed in your Memories, how great a Treasure is committed to your
 ‘ Charge, the Sheep of Christ, bought with his
 ‘ Death — the Congregation which you serve is
 ‘ his Spouse and his Body —. And if it shall happen
 ‘ any Member of that Church take any hurt by your
 ‘ Negligence, ye know the Greatness of the Fault,
 ‘ and also the horrible Punishment that will ensue--
 ‘ See that you never cease your Labour, your Care
 ‘ and Diligence, until you have done all that lieth
 ‘ in you, to bring all under your Charge, to Agreement in Faith, and
 ‘ Ripeness of Age in Christ, that there be no Error in Religion, or Vici-
 ‘ tiousness of Life—; ye ought to pray earnestly for his holy Spirit—, con-
 ‘ sider how studious you ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures,
 ‘ and framing your Manners, and of yours, according to the Scriptures;
 ‘ and for this Cause ye ought to lay aside all worldly Cares and Studies;
 ‘ we have good hope that you have clearly determined by God’s Grace,
 ‘ to give your selves wholly to this Office, whereunto it hath pleased
 ‘ God to call you, &c.

*Covers as Non-Resi-
 dents, and negligent
 Residents whereby con-
 demned, and a per-
 sonal Inspection required,
 which some of our Bre-
 thren call Gossiping
 others conventicling*

This is enough to prove their Fithess and their Call to the Ministry;
 and such as are thus fitted, are admitted and ordained.

9. It is so far from being any part of their Office, that it is altogether
 inconsistent with it, to disturb the Peace, or sow Sedition against Hea-
 then Magistrates, or to derogate from their Authority, much more to
 do any such thing against Christian Magistrates that profess the Truth,
 to whom they are engaged by more and stricter Bonds.

10. Their Persons and Estates are subject to the Magistrates Power
 and Laws. their Consciences to God, and in him and for him, to them
 as his Ordinance; but to require more of them, than of other Subjects,
 carries in it a vehement Suspicion, injurious to Religion, because a Suspi-
 cion of them more than others.

11. They cannot impose themselves upon any People, as their
 Teachers, but if any are desirous of their Labours, or accept their Pains,
 and find benefit thereby, how can they that are given to the Work,
 refuse to instruct and minister to them, any more than Paul and Silas,
 when constrained by the importunity of Lydia? *Acts 16. 15.* Will it not
 instil an ill Opinion of our Rulers, and Laws, if they shall say, Good
 People, I would preach, instruct, exhort, and comfort you, but I dare
 not, I am forbidden, and it may cost me my Liberty, and more
 than I am worth? Would it not be a sowing of Sedition among the
 People, to tell them, Orthodox and faithful, and skilful Preachers
 dare

dare not preach the Truth, no not in Corners, except to a very few !

12. Their Office is Divine, and their Calling not of Men, but of God, their chief Encouragements are spiritual and heavenly, but they ought to be protected, encouraged, and maintained, with all needful and competent Subsistence, for their bodily and ministerial Support, and Comfort in their Work, and live of the Gospel.

13. The Temporalities in the Donation of the Supream Powers, or private Patronage, may be given to whom they please, but still as accountable to God ; they should not be denied to Persons fitted for the Work of the Ministry, nor given to Men more suitable to their Fancies, than the Mind of God : Magistrates and Patrons have Rules for their Direction, as Inferiours have for theirs.

14. And therefore Superiours have need of great Wisdom and Wariness to discern who are fit and worthy, and who not, and what are the necessary Conditions to capacitate Men, for the temporal Rewards and Subsistence, lest by their unnecessary Jealousy, and Arbitrary Qualifications, they reject Men that are furnished with the most necessary Qualifications of Learning, and Holiness, which contain Peace and Honesty. Men that fear a Net, may starve for want of Corn : It is hard Fare to swallow and eat Scruples of Conscience.

15. Governours may deprive Ministers of their Temporal Maintenance, remove them from their Stations for their Non-compliance with their Laws and Orders, but no humane Power can deprive them of what they could not give them, nor take away from them, *viz.* their ministerial Abilities and Authority. I think it clear, nothing can eject them, or un-make them, but the Privation of those things which could make them Ministers.

The Crimes for which Ministers might be deposed are, either Impiety, Unrighteousness, and Immorality, few in Number, but gross in Quality.

And lest I be thought too positive, let me propound some Questions.

1. Whether those Men who are fitted by Christ for the Ministry, that are moved and assisted by the Holy Ghost, that are devoted to Christ and his Work, that are invited to preach by many, that are moved with Compassion towards many People that want, that have had Success in their Labours, are not obliged in Conscience to preach the Gospel, as often, as much, and to as many as they can ?

2. Whether it be a sufficient Reason to refuse to admit such, otherwise able and worthy Men, or to eject and silence them, because they cannot subscribe, swear, declare, what a few Men, without asking Counsel and

and Direction of God by solemn Fasting and Prayer, or by Deliberations with the fairly and equally chosen Representatives of the whole Church, did resolutely carry on by ways and Instruments of their procuring? We have our Ember Weeks for Ordination; and why not before framing Conditions, upon which, Continuance or Deprivation did depend of many hundreds of able Ministers? I do not question the lawful Authority of Governours, or detract from Order and Government; but the Question is, Whether Rulers should wholly reject such Men as are duly qualified with Gifts necessary for the Office of the Ministry, who refuse no Catholick, but Conditions dubious in their Sense, and unnecessary in their nature and kind?

3. But granting that the Rulers of the Church, can justify to Christ their Rejection of qualified Men, which is not past doubt, from those publick Stations and Endowments of the Church and charge of Souls; yet what Harm or Danger can come to precious Souls by the profitable and wholesome Labours of learned, judicious and sound Christian Ministers, endowed with the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Catholick Church? Why should not they preach the Word? Why may not People hear them? Or, why should not we accept their Help, and repute them our Fellow-Labourers, and rejoyce in their Success?

4. Have any of us that conform, heard any of them vent in the Pulpits in former times, while they had the Liberty of their Pulpits, any dilloyal, or rebellious Doctrine? any Fanaticism inconsistent with sound Reason, and the Oracles of God, the Faith of the Catholick, or Reformed Churches? Name the Men, admonish them, labour to reclaim them, and testify against them. If they were such Seeds-men, why did not the Church after her Restitution cite them, and proceed against them to Excommunication and Ejection, as intolerable Men? But on the contrary, Do we not remember our selves, and have we not heard others, remember what manner of Men they were, both in the Universities and Countries? Do we not remember some of them, as Governours of Colledges, as Tutors, as Preachers in the University, City and Country? and why may not they, who have been our Teachers, teach others? by whom we are saved and effectually called, by whom we believed, become blessed Instruments, and Ministers, by whom others may believe, be born again, and saved. Is Nonconformity an Extinction of the Spirit of Light, Truth, Purity, and Power in them? Doth Nonconformity separate them from Christ? Are they none of his, because they cannot submit to the Inventions of some, who were not so much as Bishops, when they vehemently concurred to bring us to this pass? and were restless to pass some of their particular Problems

into a Law, to which all Men must declare Assent, if the Assent be declared in their sense. As I should think it a great Sin, not to succour my Father or Brother in want and distress; so I do think it a great Sin not to relieve my Fathers and Brethren in Jesus Christ, by a Faithful Testimony, and Apology, when they are oppressed, and in danger of Prisons, Poverty, and many Miseries. And let it be noted, that I am obliged to acknowledg the Efficacy of the Holy Spirit upon the preaching of several of them, towards my Salvation; and having known the proof, and Power of Christ speaking in them, I dare not deny them before Men, lest I

*The like is gratefully
acknowledged by the
Gaily and Reverend
Bishop of Cox, of a
Nonconformist, p. 73.*

also deny Christ Jesus my Saviour in them. There are several learned, holy, laborious, and successful Ministers that were our Instructors in our younger time, who have conformed, but not so many as refused to conform, within my Knowledge, as I could name, but for offending them, and some other Reasons of my Silence, and in those times of Liberty, these seemed to be all of one Mind in the Lord. I and many more rejoiced in their Light; and some of them were among Preachers, as Solomon saith, *As the Apple-Tree is among the Trees of the Wood*; we sat under their Shadow with great Delight, and their Fruit was pleasant to our Taste. I could name the wise Master-builders that laid the Foundation, other than which no Man can lay; I could name the *Paul*, and the *Apollas*, and the *Peters* that preached to the Heart, the *Barnabas* and the *Boanerges*; the Friends of the Bridegroom, that wooed and besought us, and would not be denied till our Souls had received Christ Jesus the Lord: some of them are at rest in the Lord, and let their Names be blessed; and others are in the Cloud, and Storm, and Warfare; and to add Bonds to their many Afflictions is no small unkindness to Religion. We know of what Spirit they were, that digg'd up the Bodies of *Wikeliff*, and other Saints; it is not hard to find of what Spirit they are, that rake into the Ashes of the Dead, and sprinkle them with their profane Wit, which is like Salt that has lost its Savour, not good for the Dung-hil; it proceeds not from that Charity which covers a multitude of Sins.

5. Whether they who are called of God to the Work of the Ministry, should forsake and renounce their Calling, and look upon themselves as Lay-men, and be but as Lay-men, because they are ejected out of their Places, and conform not to the Injunctions of the Law? Many of the *Nonconformists* have Episcopal Ordination; shall they forbear all Ministerial Acts, and do but what any Master of a Family should do, instruct their own Family, and admit four more to a Participation of the Benefit? shall they renounce their Calling, who declared

declared their Trust, that they were moved by the Holy Ghost, to take the Office (of Deacon) whom the Arch-Deacon declared, when presented to the Priesthood, he thought them apt and meet for their Learning and godly Conversation; and the Bishop declared, after due Examination, We find not the contrary, but that *they be lawfully called to their Function*; for whom the Bishop prayed, and whom he hoped, that they have determined by God's Grace to give *them wholly to this Office, whereunto God hath called them*; and also called to declare and profess (before God, Angels, and the Congregation) that they *were truly called according to the Will of the Lord Jesus Christ*, give faithful Diligence *always* so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and this Church received according to the Commandments of God; to drive away erroneous Doctrines, to use *both publick and private Monitions* and Exhortations to sick and whole within your Cures, as need shall require, &c. Can any discharge them from God's Call, but God that called them? Can they sit still, and do no Ministerial Work, that have been devoted to the Ministry, that have been prayed for, and exhorted to give themselves *wholly* to it? Or do they cease to be Ministers, except it be in that Cure to which they were instituted and inducted? Then are we made, tho not Independent, yet Congregational Ministers, and are Ministers only in that particular Congregation? If they ought not to renounce their Ministry, then they may preach, and do other Ministerial Offices, as they have opportunity. Others are not Episcopally ordained; but if they are moved by the Holy Ghost, are learned, exercised in the Scriptures, are of Godly Conversation, and give themselves to the Work, are not they called of God? If not, what's the meaning of the fore-cited Word in the ordering of Priests and Deacons; '*Then shall the Bishop say unto the People, Good People, these are they whom we purpose, God willing, to receive this day unto the Office of Priesthood*: For after due Examination we find not the contrary, but that they be *lawfully called to their Function and Ministry*, and be persons meet for the same —? Doth not the Bishop look upon them as internally called, and that internal Calling declared and signified, and therefore receives them? And tho they have not Episcopal Imposition of Hands; if they have Imposition of Hands of Presbyters, and are set apart by Fasting and Prayer, are they not more than Lay-men, or private Believers? They who say they are but Lay-men, have no better Reasons than the *Romanists* had, who called our Reformed Bishops; no true Bishops, nor Priests. *Anthony Champney* dedicated, or rather directed his Book of the Vocation of Bishops, &c. to Arch-Bishop *Abber*, with no higher

*These other Arguments
are urged by heavenly
Mr. Jos. Allen, say to
Archippus, &c.*

Title, than *To Mr. George Abbot, called Arch-bishop of Canterbury.* And the most eminent Defenders of our Protestant Religion, tho they asserted a Power of Ordination to reside in the Bishop, as without whom

See Mr. Fran. Mason,
§. 7, 9. *Defence of Or-*
ordination.

See Dr. White's Works,
way to the true Church,
§. 53. p. 211.

there was no regular Ordination; yet they justified the calling of Forreign Divines and Churches by Presbyters without Bishops, and the Reasons they used to vindicate them, will serve to vindicate those among us, that have no other. And when as he (the Jesuit) saith, 'They (Luther and Calvin) succeeded no Apostolick Bishops, neither had any Calling to preach that new Faith.

See Dr. Field of the
Church, Book 3 c. 39.
Consensus Eccles. Cathol.
contra Trident. propo-
sitionibus, p. 11.
de Ecclesia, p. 11.
Bishop Bilson of Sab-
jection, Par. 3. p. 535.

Answer, That for the *External Succession*, whereof we have spoken, we cure not; It is sufficient that in Doctrine they succeeded the Apostles, and Primitive Churches — It is the Custom of the Catholick Church, *ut Episcopi legiti- me ordinent, sed si quis a Presbytero ordinatus fuerit, Or- dinatio illa etiam vera est, ex ejusdem Ecclesie Catho- lica judicio*, saith the Reverend Bishop Carlton: and Bishop Bilson, that learned Defender of Bishops Answers *Philander. Phil.* 'The Apostles Com- mission we know, but yours we do not know.

Theop. You cannot be ignorant of ours, if you know theirs; so long as we teach the same Doctrine which they did, we have the same Power and Authority to preach which they had, &c.

If these Answers of the learned Defenders of the Protestant Cause, are not trae and catholick, they are not good, nor sufficient: if they are good against the Papists, they are strong for our Protestant dissenting-Preachers; who, if they be but Lay-men, should be ordained: but the very word Re-ordination doth imply an Ordination.

And Ordination is not to be repeated, altho it be disorderly and out of Course, any more than Baptism in the Catholick Church, saith the same Reverend Bishop Carlton.

I must keep my self to Generals, for I do not know the particular Cases, Scruples and Reasons of particular Persons. Some have taken Episcopal Ordination, that cannot conform, that were ordained by Presbyters before; those that have not, scruple Re-ordination, lest they should null their former, and their Administrations, and plead for themselves, that they were innocent from the Exclusion of the Bishops. And what if some sought Episcopal Ordination, and were refused, tho sufficiently recommended? The most that were ordained, were ordained by an *Irish* Bishop in *London*, which needed not, if all our

English

English Bishops had been willing to ordain. I could name one Bishop that did refuse to ordain, that lived most conveniently for Access; and the Ordination of that * *Agadoensis*; * *An Irish Bishop*. was not Canonical, nor free from just Offence:

But further, even they who have the internal Call, consisting of good Learning, Knowledge in the Scriptures, and are of a good exemplary Conversation, and moved by the Spirit, are not to be reckoned as Lay-men, but next to Pre-byters or Ministers, according to the declared Judgment of great and eminent Protestants. Arch-bishop *Abbot* added this Observation, to the 5th Section of the second

Chapter; *De Circumcisione & Baptismo*. *Martin* *Questions sex distinctæ, &c. per G. von*
Bucer saith, that some of the *Hay-men*, were admitted to read and interpret the Holy Scriptures, in the Primitive and purer Church, which they sometimes did perform in the presence of the Bishops; and nameth *Origen* and others; namely, Such in whom the singular Gifts of the Holy Spirit did appear, that it might be manifest to the Rectors of the Churches, that their Labour in instructing the People in the Mysteries of the Faith, would not a little profit them. And saith he, If any Man add, what the truly learned *Hieron Zanchius* speaks indefinitely —, when from the Practice of the purer Church, they who were not in Holy Orders, did preach the Gospel. We answer, There is a difference to be made between the simple Lay-man, or the common sort, to whom Power is given in the *Romish* Church to baptize, and them who are *instar Ministrorum Evangelij*; who are like the Ministers of the Gospel; and who not only excel the common sort of Men, for their Learning in holy things, but are called by the special, publick and common Decree of the Bishop; and them that are over the Congregation, publickly to interpret Scripture. And these, and not others, the words of *Bucer* do note or point at, &c. — *Istos ego non audeo, ad ordinariorum, & vulgarium Laicorum Conditiones revocare cum ad Presbyteros tam propè accedant*. I dare not bring down these to the Condition of ordinary, and vulgar Lay-men, that come so near to Presbyters (or Ministers) saith the learned *Abbot* of this sort; there are scarce any to be found at this day (saith he) for the multitude of them that serve in Churches. And whether *Tertullian* and *Hilfom* speak of such as these, that were permitted to baptize, I leave to the Judgment of the Learned.

Abbat um, fig. 1000.

Bucer in Ep. 1. ad Ep. pres. c. 4.

By these Testimonies we see how different the Judgment of too many of this present Age is, from the Judgment and Candor of the most venerable Writers of former times. Now Schismatick is but a common Name to distinguish the *Nonconformists* from the Church-men; and one

*Defence of Dr. Stil-
lingfleet, pag. 69.*

as in a fit of Kindness is far from charging them with Schism, if they would not leave the Church, but conform as *Lay-men*, as the *Nonconformists* did. But did the old *Nonconformists* conform as *Lay-men*?

So I suppose we all conform but as *Lay-men*, when we do not officiate as Ministers; we answer as People answer, and do no more than People do. But I think the old *Nonconformists* did reckon themselves when they left their Livings, as much, and as truly Ministers, as they did when they had their Livings, and did preach publickly by Connivance, as Ministers in most Counties. Our present *Nonconformists* would thankfully accept the Favour, which most of the old did enjoy, till Conformity grew too hot even for many Conformists; I need not name the Times, nor the Planets that then bore Rule.

But who can forbear lamenting the Condition of our Brethren, and of multitudes of precious Souls! Is there any Man qualified with a Competency of Learning, that can say, he is moved by the holy Ghost? that leads a good Life? that promiseth to give himself to the Work of God? but shall be acknowledged by the Ordainer, to be called of God, even before he layeth on his Hands? but if this very same Man shall afterwards scruple, or refuse, to assent to all and every thing, &c. he shall no longer be accounted by some Men, as a Man called of God, but must become again as a *Lay-man*, or else he cannot escape being a Schismatick: which is enough to tempt a Man to think, that these make the Gift of Subscribing, and the Faculty of assenting and consenting to other Mens Inventions, to be the essentialling and constituting Qualification of a Minister, without which, tho he be never so well furnished with other Gifts, he shall be accounted but a *Lay-man*, and must do no more than a *Lay-man*, or else there's no avoiding the odious Crime of Schism. And hence this Notion may arise, like a Meteor in the Firmament of the Church, to be gazed upon, and afford matter of Observation, if not of Prediction. That Conformity to an Ordinance of Men doth effectually make a Minister of Jesus Christ, in the Church of *England*; and while he continueth in the same Mind he was in, at 24 Years of Age, all his life-time, and be not prepared to submit to all after-Devices, that may be added, he shall fall from the Grace and Dignity of his Ordination and Ministry, and return to his first simple Being, of remotely disposed matter of meer Laity. If it be said, no; for he being once ordained, he is a Minister of the Universal Church. Well, that's true; but if he cannot conform to every Point, then he cannot exercise his Ministry in this Church: and then the Consequence is obvious; such are the Conditions of the exercise of the Ministry in the Church of *England* at this day, that a Minister of the Universal Church cannot exercise his Office, no not
in

in any Chappel of Ease in this Kingdom, except he submit to them ; and if he cannot exercise his Ministry, after he is called unto it, what doth it profit him to be a Minister ? or what is the Church the better for his Office ? If one acknowledged to be a Minister of the Universal Church, may not administer in a particular Church, then is it not because that particular Church requires some Conditions, which are not so large as the Rules and Conditions of the Universal Church ? This may put us to search whether different Rules, stricter Laws prescribed, as Conditions of Entrance and Continuance in the Ministry, and Church-Communion, be not the Cause or Occasion of Schisms in particular Churches ? These Catholick Rules and Conditions are to be taken, and received from the Apostles, who went into all the World to gather, and to found Christian Churches. They gave us Laws enow to govern any particular Church, who were sent into all the World : And no Decrees of General Councils are of equal Observation with the Scriptures, not only because of their Sanctity, but because of their Universality ; and the very Errors and Mistakes of them in some Particulars are tolerable, that do what they can to find out and follow the Will of God in Scripture.

And this Diversity can be no Inconvenience to any Church, because of the plain Injunctions and Commands of keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, of loving, and forbearing one another in Love.

But to return, What shall we say ? Are they but Lay-men, or but *quasi* Lay-men, that were once ordained by *Diocesans* ? or what if others can prove by the Holy Scriptures, and the Catholick Rules of Faith, that they are called of God, and make proof of their Gifts, which make them serviceable to the Souls of poor Sinners, and only scruple some late implicating perplexing Terms, what shall they do in this case ? They would enter into the Service, according to the uncontroverted general Rules of Christ, the Sovereign Law-giver of his Church ; but that will not serve the turn, they must do more : They have received Gifts from the Spirit, of the same nature with other Ministers, they'l submit their Gifts to the Trial, to free them from the Fanaticism imputed to them. These Gifts are for some use ; they are their Talents, and they must give an account of them to the Giver of them at his appearing. Whither can any of them go, and not be serviceable ? Is there any City, Town, Parish, or noble Family in *England*, in which there is not need, or where such as they may not be exceeding profitable ? but in some Places, there is a crying need ! O how few, few Labourers are there in very large Fields ! yea, as offensive as the presence of the Brethren are in many places, there is not an useles Man among them, nor one place hardly where is not need, if not extream need. What shall they do ? conform to the Church.

as Lay-men only ! What if the Bottle be so full, that its ready to burst ? what if the Fire of Zeal, true Zeal, kindle ? must they not speak with their Tongue ! What if the Breast be full, and they who were begotten in Christ Jesus by their Ministry, cry, cry to them ; *O give us of the sincere Milk of the Word !* Shall they say, No, my Breast is full, but I must not draw it out ? What if they have Bread enough, and can divide it, and see a Company of poor Souls ready to starve, and pine for Want, and yet they must not give them a piece of Bread ? City Ministers are most quarelsome and contentious with them ; but if from their high Places they saw and knew but what I know, instead of charging them with Separation and Schism, they would beg of Authority, that they would send them into many places of the Land, which are more like a Wilderness, than the Garden of the Lord : but instead of doing this, some have written to prepare a prejudiced People to entertain them with Stones ; or beseech them to depart out of their Coasts ; and not to open their Doors to entertain them, or their Ears to hear them. Oh ! how are many of the Servants of God, true Subjects, able Preachers, at this day forced to hide, and many are as shy, and close to entertain them, as if they were Traitors, and the Hue and Cry were out against them !

But what if these Men cannot think themselves discharged of their Work, when their Hire is stopt ? they cannot but pity those that have no Shepherds, or not enow ; they cannot stop their Ears against the Cry of the poor ; what if Conscience cry, *Wo to me, if I preach not the Gospel !* O there are too many that never heard that Preaching in their Bosom. Some have pleaded that Wo concerned none but the Apostle ; what shall they do between two Woes ? Wo from Christ if I preach not, and Wo from Men if I preach !

Object. They must obey the Laws, obey Authority.

Ans. So they must, and, as far they can, they do.

Object. But they say, they must obey God rather than Men.

Ans. So did the Apostles, who taught Obedience to Governours. Neither may any godly Prince take it as any *Dishonour* to his Estate, to see God obeyed before him ; for he is not God, but the Minister of God, saith our Venerable Father, Bishop Jewel.

Object. But our King, and Magistrates, and Laws, are not such as They were, neither are our Conventiclers Apostles.

Ans. True, I cast no Reflections upon the King, but acknowledge his Life, and Protestancy to be singular Mercies and Priviledges. But if the first Christian Churches were planted, and the Faith preached where the Rulers

*Disfence of the Apo-
logy, part 1. p. 20. of
my Edit.*

Rulers were Unbelievers, disaffected to it, and Persecuters of it; theⁿ Preachers that preach the Doctrine of the Apostles, and live according to the Gospel, may humbly expect, if not lay some Claim to a Privilege of preaching, and worshipping God, as near as they can discern according to his mind.

The Case of the Brethren is so clear in it self, that some in Power have no other colour for proceeding against them, than as Men that exercise *another Religion*, as I can produce, which clearly intimates, that it is unreasonable to proceed to Confiscations and Banishment against Men that profess the same Religion. And whereas Godliness and Honesty may claim Protection, they represent them as wicked and dishonest in the highest Degree, that is, seditious, and withdrawing the King's Subjects from their Allegiance, &c.

The Canon Law calls their divers Orders, Religion; but to Christians and Protestants there is but one Religion.

But this is the old Language, as the most Reverend Bishop Jewel writes, as objected against them, that we be fallen from the Catholick Church, and by a wicked Schism have shaken the whole World, and troubled the common Peace, and universal Quiet of the Church: and that as *Dathan* and *Abiram* conspired in times past against *Moses* and *Aaron*; even so we this day have renounced the Bishop of *Rome*, without any reasonable Cause.

Apolog. c. 2. Divis. 7. p. 21.

But let us see wherein our Brethren are to be blamed, or do any thing but what our King and Governours may allow, the Primitive Bishops of our Reformation being Judges.

The Religion of our Brethren is, *Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* 'It is the Religion of Christ, and not of 'Anti-christ. I reckon it cannot stand with the Prince's Duty to reverse 'this heavenly Decree; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*, &c. with 'establishing two Religions in one Realm; the 'first authorized by Christ, and bequeathed in his 'Testament to the Church; the next invented of 'Antichrist, and flatly repugnant to the Prophetical and Apostolical Scriptures —. [Our Brethren endeavour to keep strictly to the Scripture, and Christ, as Law-giver.]

Bishop Wilson of Subjection, Part 1. p. 21. Edit. 4^o.

'Then as the Minister must dispence the Word of Truth, be there- 'with offended and grieved who list; so the Magistrate may draw the 'Sword of Justice to compel, and punish such as 'be blindly led, and maliciously bent to resist 'sound Doctrine: Who then should be punished, Preachers? or they, or those Officers that trouble them?

Part 1. pag. 33.

Object. But the Magistrate is to be obeyed in all lawful things, and every particular Church hath power to ordain Ceremonies, so they be not contrary to God's Word.

Ans. No Man disputes the Magistrate's Power in commanding things good and necessary; the Doubt is concerning things which are indifferent, as some suppose, but not indifferent as the Dissenters suppose. Of things indifferent, hear the Judgment of the same learned Bishop: *We may not for things indifferent trouble the weak Minds of our Brethren; yet this Rule bindeth no Magistrate to remit the Punishment of Error and Infidelity, because God hath charged to suffer*

Ibid. Pag. 33. *no kind of Evil unrevenge'd (and this is the greatest) whose Voice they must hear, whose Will they must obey, though they were sure thereby to scandalize never so many both Aliens and Subjects.*

If they are things truly indifferent, then Governours may forbear to command them, whereas many do rationally scruple the Observation of them, and cannot without Sin, observe them. Condescension and Self-denial would rid Mens Consciencés out of this Strait, between the Magistrate's Command, and the Dictates of Conscience.

Object. But by their Preaching, and separate Meetings, they break the Communion of the Church, and are guilty of Schism, and to tolerate them is to tolerate a Schism.

Ans. This is the great Clamor of the Accusers: but let us see where in Communion of Saints and Churches doth consist, and then we shall see what Schism. I cannot quote a more learned Doctor of this Church, or of greater Authority, than the same Reverend Bishop *Bilson*; he shall decide this Case.

Ibid. Part 2. p. 223, 224. 'It is a most pernicious Fancy to think the Communion of Christ's Church depends upon the Pope's Person, or Regiment (*let them that imagine one Universal Sovereign Power over the Church in our days, whether one or many, observe this Doctrine;*) and that divers Nations and Countries differing by Customs, Laws, and Manners (so they hold one and the same Rule of Faith in the Bond of Peace) cannot be parts of the Catholick Church, Communicant one with another, and perfectly united in Spirit and Truth each to other; and fy on your Follies that rack your Creed, and rob Christ of his Honour, and the Church of all her Comfort and Security, whilst you make the Unity of Christ's Members to consist in Obedience to the Bishop of Rome, and not in Coherence with the Son of God!

'The Communion of Saints, and near dependance of the Godly each on other, and all of their Head, standeth not in *external Rites, Customs,*
and

and Manners, as you would fashion out a Church observing the Pope's Canons —; but in believing the same Truth, tasting of the same Grace, resting on the same Hope, calling on the same God, rejoicing in the same Spirit, whereby they be sealed, sanctified, and preserved against the day of Redemption —. The Communion of the Catholick Church is not broken by *diversity and variety of Rites, Customs, Laws, and Fashions*, which many Places and Countries have different each from other, except they be repugnant to Faith and Good-manners, as *St. Augustine ad Januarium, Irenaeus &c. Eusebius, l. 5. c. 23. Socrates, l. 5. c. 22.*

Simple Verity is the Band of Unity. *Jewel.* Bishop *Carlton* makes the Unity of the Church to consist in one Head, Christ; one Body, one Spirit, one Faith, or one Rule of Faith.

*D-fence, p. 450. Piz-
lection, de Ecclesiâ.*

And if Unity consists in Uniformity in the same Form of Prayer, Liturgy, and Ceremonies, there was no such thing as Unity, there were as great Schisms in the Apostles days, as among our Brethren, according to the Judgment of the same learned Bishop *Bil-*

son —. Some of their own might be so vain-glorious as in making their Prayers at the Lord's Table (which was then done by Heart, and not after any prescribed Order or Form) to shew the Gift of Tongues —.

*Ibid. fourth part, p.
619, 620, &c.*

In the publick Service of the Church, the Ministers and Elders, which were many, both Travellers, and there Dwellers, had every Man his Psalm, his Instruction, his Tongue, Revelation, or Interpretation, as the Spirit of Grace thought most expedient —. And other Order in the Divine Service in the Apostolick or Primitive Church, we read for certain of none, besides the Action of the Lord's Supper, which the Apostles, and so no doubt all their Churches, always used in the end of their publick Meetings, but with no set Prayers, save only the Lord's Prayer, as *Gregory* confesseth.

The rest of their Prayers, Blessings, and Thanks-givings, were in every place made by the Gift of the Holy Ghost, inspiring such as were set to teach and govern the Church. And you have

long since their time, framed a Liturgy in *James's* Name. *Pag. 620.*

— Yet for so much as the Church of Christ did not ac-

knowledg it — your main Foundation is a Dream of your own, that

the Church of *Corinth* had a prescribed number and order

of Prayers pronounced by some one Chaplain, that said

Pag. 621

his Lesson within-book, or might not go one Line beside

his *Missale* for any good —. Where the Christians under

the Apostles had in their Assemblies, first, prophecying, i. e. declaring

‘of God’s Will, and revealing of his Word; at which the Infidels, and
 ‘new Converts unbaptized might be present: and next, Prayers and
 ‘Psalms, to celebrate the Goodness and Kindness of God, and to prepare
 ‘their Minds for the Lord’s Table, to which all the Faithful came with
 ‘one Consent of Heart and Voice, giving Thanks to God for their
 ‘Redemption, &c. And this was done by the mouths of such Pastors
 ‘and Ministers, as it pleased the Holy Ghost to direct and inspire for

‘that Function and Action. The People hearing, *under-*
 Pag. 622. ‘standing, and confirming their Prayers and Thanks with

‘saying, *Amen*: and other *Divine Service than this they had*
 Pag. 636. ‘*none* —. We do not think that *Basil* or *Chrysostom*, would

‘take upon them to make a new Form of Church-Service,
 ‘if *St. James* the Apostle had done it before them.

From this Testimony, it is clear, that if Uniformity in one Form of
 Worship, or Common-Prayer, and Ceremonies be necessary for Church-
 Union, then there was no Church-Union, or Catholick-Communion
 in the Apostolical Churches, because there was no Form or Order of
 Divine Service set and prescribed: But there was the most Christian and
 Catholick Communion in that Diversity; therefore Catholick Union
 and Communion, without one prescribed and set Form.

And hence the Dissenting Brethren have the Countenance of an
 ancient venerable Bishop of *Winchester* for them, and to convince their
 Troublers for using a Worship different from the Liturgy of the Church
 of *England*. Prophe-ying, praying, praising God, are parts of God’s
 Worship, tho in differing Words and Method, they are the same Di-
 vine Worship. And who act nearest the Primitive Pattern of the
 Apostles, and purest times, they who worship God in Christ by the Spi-
 rit, or they who will not suffer them?

Object. But the Apostles and Teachers had the Guidance of the
 Spirit.

Ans. They had, but that Assistance which they had for performing
 the Worship of God, was not extraordinary, or peculiar to their Times;

because Gospel-Worship was to be performed in
 all After-ages of the Church, and by Consequence,
 the Assistance of the Spirit was to continue to all
 Ministers in succeeding Ages, without whose Assi-
 stance we can do nothing. And the Holy Spirit
 doth continue to give Gifts and Graces to his Mini-
 sters and People: and if one Form were absolute-
 ly necessary for all Ages, it is a wonder that the

Apostles did not leave us one. Form is but a mode, and to be used, or
 not used, as is most for Edification; and they that use it not, should
 not,

— Quo in loco (*scil.*
 Jo. 20.) ostendit cum
 solum posse baptizare,
 & remissionem pecca-
 torum dare, qui habeat
 Spiritum Sanctum Cy-
 prian ad magnum.

not condemn them that use it, and they who use it, should not, as I conceive, judg them as Schismatics that use it not, but joyn one with another.

Object. But it is a Disorder in the same Church and Government, and not to be born, it looks like a different Religion.

Ans. The *Romanists* have often charged the Church of *England* with permitting different Religions in the Nation : But let the same learned Bishop answer for me. ‘In *England*, the People, both *Pag. 15.*
 ‘ strange and liege, worship God the Father in Spirit and
 ‘ Truth, according to the Gospel of his Son, agreeing together in the
 ‘ substance of one Faith, and the right Order of Christ’s Sacraments :
 ‘ Only Strangers are suffered in their Churches to use their own Tongue,
 ‘ and retain their own Ceremonies, as be neither against Faith, nor
 ‘ adverse to good Manners, and therefore, by *St. Augustine’s* judgment,
 ‘ may go for indifferent, and may be born in *Christian Unity*, without Offence
 ‘ or Confusion—. Oh ! if this Doctrine were believed in our days, the
 People of God might be said to rest at Noon ! And he was not singular. In *Doctrinâ & Fidei Orthodoxæ Professione discordia inter nos nulla*
 (saith the learned *Crakenthorp* of the Puritans)
Hac integrâ in Ritibus, & Disciplinâ discrimen ferendum utriq; scimus. Difference in Ceremonies and
 Discipline was tolerable in their Opinion, but now lat. c. 43. p. 254.
 intolerable. The Champions of the Church of
England in former days against the Papists were moderate, when we
 know there was a different way of Discipline and Decency secretly practi-
 sed. If Doctrine be the direction of Practice, to be moderate in Do-
 ctrine, but severe in Practice and Execution, is to put out the Candle,
 and kindle a Fire ; to preach Charity, but to shew no Mercy.

To draw towards a Conclusion ; Let us but truly judg of the elder
Nonconformists with righteous Judgment.

1. Before his Majestie’s wonderful Restauration, in all Countries and
 Places where they lived and preached, who did rebuke, reprove, exhort,
 and fulfil all parts of Ministers more than they ? Who maintained Pro-
 testant Doctrines, preached for Conviction, Conversion, Holiness and
 Rightcouness more than they ? Who vindicated all Ordinances from
 some that pretended to live above them ? Others that denied the ne-
 cessity and use of them ? and from the Profanation of sacred Things ?
 And who did more forwardly assist and concur to settle the Government
 upon ancient Foundations, and in the Inheritor of the Royal Throne ?
 Who were more hated by impious Sects, or that laboured more to con-
 vince and reduce them, than they ?

2. At that time, and since, how highly were they placed in the King’s
 good Opinion ? as is fully exprest in his Royal Declaration.

3. They

3. They did shew a Forwardness and Zeal to settle the Church, denying their own private Opinions, to lay down solid Foundations for a Comprehensive Church.

4. When they quietly submitted to the Law of their Ejection; did they, did any of them sow Sedition, or ill Principles of Faction? was their Exhortation of deceit or guile? to incense their loving Auditors, or oblige and conjure them to any thing inconsistent with the Gospel? or unlike Men, as going from the Pulpit, to God's Tribunal, to give him an Account of their Doctrine, Faith, manner of Life? see any of their broken Notes, and Farewell-Sermons, printed much to their Disadvantage! Testify against them who can!

5. Except they had renounced their sacred Calling, and silenced themselves, who could have employed their Labours with more inoffensiveness to Authority, more Toil to themselves, and more Profit to precious Souls, and less Opposition to the publick than they did? (as will appear in Instances) An honourable Member (Sir H. C. Anno 1670, 71) in full Parliament took notice of it that there were no Conventicles: yes, they took pains to preach, when others were at rest in great Privacies and Solitudes. And let's be just: who hath made any Observation of People, and Affairs, that will not say, for one Schismatick we had had many,

See Mr. Allen, say to Archippus p. 23 scil. your not preaching will occasion Separation indeed, &c.

had it not been for their great Industry; and who for all that are Schismaticks but they! It is not Thanks-worthy to keep poor weak Souls in the Faith and Truth, except they turn Lay-men, and all come up even to the Rails, i. e. to the heighth.

6. God and the King made their Assemblies so numerous and publick; God by a tremendous course of Judgments, yet remembering Mercy: The King, after 12 Years Experience of fruitless Severity, sent out his Declaration of Indulgence. Some of themselves have published the Providence of God, but it is not worth the noting; and they that are resolved on their way, will not be hindred by making Observation, even of the Works of God. When God sent a dreadful Plague, and the Angel stood over London with his drawn Sword, as our Jerusalem; then the King, and Court, and Parliament removed to Oxford; and when many Churches were empty, God stirred up many of the Nonconformists to go and preach up and down; then they had the use of Churches, and numerous Assemblies, and gained many Souls to God by them, and drew the Hearts of a desolate People to themselves, which could never since be alienated from them. And when the Popish Faction opposed by the Loyal Persons, got an Act to remove them from Corporations; they were then most employed in the Capital City in spite of their Adversaries, and God protected them, and the Plague proved

proved their Sanctuary from that Law. Next Year the City was burnt, and the Inhabitants of the principal Parts of it were driven into Corners; and the *Nonconformists* had the advantage! Who that knew them would not entertain them as Comforters, in a distracted ruined Condition! Then the Conformists were driven out of Churches too, and some felt the loss of Livings, to teach them Compassion towards their ejected Brethren; and the common Enemy of them both shewed the World what he would do with us, as well as them: And I am confident, if now the *Nonconformists* could be rooted out, the Church-men shall not stand long after them; no, tho they should; which God forbid, comply with them. Popish Mercy is like raging Fire, takes all before it, and even turning shall not save us; and they who are so officious to serve their Interest now, may not come off so well with their Reward as *Adonibezek* did. Many suffered great Losses, lived in great danger and distraction by that Corporation-Act, but the Enactors could never accomplish their full design by it; the very Souldiers that were employed to keep out People, and to guard the Meeting-places, were not pleased with their Office, and shewed Civility to the Ministers in some places. Their Sufferings went against the common sense of Men: but so captious were some Men, so zealous, rather so jealous, to justify their Resolutions, that strange Stories were carried, and dispersed of seditious Doctrines, Preachers were presented as Incendiaries, to incense the Magistrate against them; that it was dangerous for the Preachers to quote some Texts of Scriptures; and just cause there is why such unchristian Spirits should be afraid of Scriptures.

7. After all this Distraction and Trouble, His Majesty sent out his Declaration of Indulgence, and they became licensed Preachers. It is true, the Parliament at their next meeting declared against it, as contrary to the Laws, and his Majesty called it in; but it proved, and proves profitable to the *Nonconformists* several ways.

1. The very Parliament that was against the Declaration, continued rather favourable towards the *Nonconformists* than sharp; the Laws continued, but the Execution cooled and abated.

2. Such as built Tabernacles and the most convenient Places they could, held them, and their Congregations stuck to them, and both without Molestation, until now, that their *old Friend* awakes as one out of sleep, lest they should sow good Seed in the Field.

3. Though that Declaration of Indulgence, and the Licences granted them, cannot protect them from the Arrests of Mens Passions, nor from the violent Hands of such (as are like *Saul's*) against them; yet they do clearly vindicate them from the odious

Nor could at that time, as is to be seen in what follows of the sufferings of the Nonconformists.

Slander of seditious and evil Men. For can it be thought that the King would have so little regard to Truth, Faith, Peace, to his own Safety, and the Preservation of his Subjects from the infection of wicked and cursed Principles, as to grant Licences to seditious Preachers, to Doctors of Rebellion, or Underminers of Church and State? they are most the same Men, who were licensed by the King; if the King was deceived in them; if they are dangerous and evil Men, testify against them, and no greater Favour is desired for them, but Truth and Justice. Let them that clamor against them and asperse them, do it, and preserve their Honour and Reverence of the King immaculate if they can.

Christianum esse (Nonconformistam esse) aut est Crimen, aut non est; si Crimen est, cur non interficis consistentem? si Crimen non est, quid persequeris innocentem? Cyp. contra Demetrianum. Tract. 1.

And so much for that, by way of Apology; now follows the second Query.

2. Whether it be not hard to silence, suppress, and punish the Orthodox *Nonconformists*, for endeavouring the everlasting Salvation of precious Souls by their Preaching and other Religious Exercises?

I cannot call to mind more than three things that can be urged against them, or to justify their Sufferings.

1. They transgress the Laws and Orders of the Church, made by the Bishops, Rulers, and Fathers of the Church.

2. They transgress against the Statutes of the Land, and why should they be privileged or spared if they transgress?

3. They are Men uncalled to preach the Gospel; and it is fit such Men should be restrained.

To the first, It may be answered, waving the Disputes about Church-Rulers, and the Restriction of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; that the present Terms of Ministerial Liberty were not the Result and Decrees of all the Bishops of the Church after Consultation and free debate, supposing all the Power to be lodged in them; but we know that our Ecclesiastical Laws are made by our Convocation, and enacted and established by the Civil Power; whether there was any Debate or Disputation about these Impositions, is not altogether unknown. We read that in the Council at *Jerusalem*, met to consider a Case, as plain and easy as any of our Matters can be supposed to be, that they came not to a Determination, till after much disputing, there was nothing but open dealing. The Apostle of the Circumcision did not protest against the Apostle of the Uncircumcision, as unfit to be there, no tart Repre-

Reprehensions or Magisterial Checks were given, but what concerned the whole Church, was debated by the whole Church, the Apostles and Elders, and the Church, *Acts* 15. 6, 7, 22. and nothing resolved; but after Consideration and Disputation, they give the Churches of *Antioch* an account of their Consultation, and lay upon them none but necessary things, without either Penalty or Sanction, but this, *from which, if you keep your selves ye shall do well.* I cannot think that the Reverend *Ver. 29.* Mr. *Baxter* doth reflect upon all, or most of the Bishops, by his frequent mention of *Ithacius* and *Idacius*, but well knows our Impositions to be *the Will and Pleasure* of but a small number of them; and if it be so, we may question the Right which a few Bishops had to make Laws for the whole Church, till we see their Patent.

2. But they transgress other Temporal Laws made by lawful Authority. 1. A lawful Authority is made up of several Estates in this Kingdom; whereof one is chosen by the free Votes of the People of such a rank, as have an Interest in the Land. I have heard some doubt, whether that House of Commons were so truly, their Representatives, because many of them were obtruded upon the People, and many indirect and unlawful ways were taken to sort them together. But 2. waving that, succeeding Parliaments have marked out these Laws to give them an Expiration; and were it not for Fomentations, and high Drops used by some, to keep them in Life and Vigor, they had been buried in neglect by this time. 3. But granting they are in as full force as ever; yet Laws are compared to the Grape, which being too much pressed, yieldeth an hard and *unwholsome* Wine; as the wise Lord Chancellor || *Bacon* said. To press out such a Wine, and force an exhausted party to pay dearly for it, is not the way to nourish good Blood in such a diseased Body as ours is. But having spoken of this in the *Second Plea*, I shall add no more here, but reserve something for a Postscript, concerning what I said in that.

|| *Wise and moderate
Discourse concerning
Church-Affairs*, p. 37.

3. The last Prejudice against them is, that they are Men uncalled to preach.

Answer; All of the Seniors of them had Episcopal Ordination; others have another kind, and most, if not all I plead for, have the internal, and I dare say, would cheerfully answer all the Interrogatories in the Examination, in the ordering of Priests, except a part of the last. But my Answer is, that when the calling of Ministers hath been doubted of, or questioned, as the calling of our Bishops and Ministry hath been by the Papists; Our most Reverend Fathers have insisted upon one certain Rule of Trial of true Ministers and Pastors. Hear what

*Sermon on 1 Cor. 4.
1, 2. fol. 223.*

our famous and blessed Bishop *Jewel* preached. 'By this therefore, my Brethren, shall you soon try, whether they are the true Servants of God; for if they shall only disclose unto you the Will of God, if they shall preach unto you the Secrets of God's Gospel, and the Glory of his holy Name, then are they true Servants, then are they Christ's Ministers, and faithful Dispensers of God's Secrets, &c. In these our days the Ministers of God, and Preachers of his Gospel, are evil spoken of among all Men; some say, they are unlearned, they are Crafts-men—. Some say they preach they cannot tell what; they speak against Prayer, Fasting, Alms-deeds, and all other good Works—. Unto all this I say, it is sufficient for us to be found the Servants of God, and faithful Dispensers of God's Secrets. When *Paul* came from *Berea* to *Thessalonica*, and began to preach the Gospel there, the People ran to their Books, searched the Scriptures, and when they found in all Points they agreed therewith, then they believed *Paul*—. Even so let us do, good Brethren —; let us examine and try their Doctrine with the Touchstone of God's Word, and confer their Teaching, their Discipline with the Scriptures of the Holy Ghost —, and then be you Judges; then if you see that we teach you nothing but the Mysteries of God; that we disclose to you the Will of God; if you see we preach unto you no other thing than the Secrets of God's Gospel, esteem us to be the Servants of God, the Ministers of Christ, &c.

Folio 223, 226. So Dr. Benefield, de Sacerdotio Evangelico, §.43. besides Bilson, &c. above quoted.

There are some other popular Prejudices instilled into many, and dispersed to no other effect, but to foment ill Nature, Passion, and a Spirit of Faction: such is that of a late Writer, who writes, *They set up Schismatical Conventicles, and preach People into Scruples and Factions.* How knows he that? by his own hearing, or by hear-say? How many hath he cured, that resorted unto him for Satisfaction? It is no wonder that People are abused into a Suspicion, that their Nonconformity is but a Pretence, a conscientious Disguise to cover Rebellious Principles; that they began the War, which was as impossible, as it is historically untrue: That they preach in Barns, and other places, out of dislike of Churches. I suppose, if they were offered Churches, they would not refuse them: But as Conventicles are counted as places of Disgrace, so it's an Unhappiness they have no better, and a greater, that they may not have *them*. His Gospel who was laid in a Manger, may be preached in a Barn, if there be no room for his Preachers in better places. The Primitive Christians were glad of any places. The *Waldenses* preached

preached in Barns, who were glorious Confessors of the Christian Verity. And to avoid both Danger and Offence, some of our *Nonconformists* have preached in Caves and Pits; to whose Honour or Dishonour be it spoken.

These Prejudices cast out of the way, it were easy to out-match these Prejudices; but I will not use a hand to record what is not to be heard without Trouble; but it is not unfit to take notice of so much as belongs to the Question in hand; and no more than will serve to prepare Mens Minds to believe there are Complaints, which should affect and move the Hearts of our Rulers, to hearken to the Motions of the Reconcilers, and Peace-makers. And that I may handle a tender Point, with as much Tendernefs and Modesty even towards them, that make the Hearts of Christians groan and mourn, I'll proceed by Questions.

1. What had the Parishes and Congregations of *England* done to provoke the few, but potent Managers of our Ecclesiastical Affairs, to deprive them of some of the most painful, vigilant, successful, exemplary Pastors, that ever any Church enjoyed? The most learned Lord Chancellor *Bacon* said (of the Bishops) 'As for their easy silencing of them in such great scarcity of *Wise and moderate* Preachers, it is to punish the People, and not them. *Discourse*, p. 35. It must be confessed, we all had sinned; but most notoriously two sorts of People; first, those that could not endure sound Doctrine, nor Reproofs, and hate to be reformed; and others, who knew not the time of the Visitation, were too sleepy and luke-warm, and could too easily part with those who laboured to win them, and bring them to God by Repentance, Faith and Love. Could they put in better in their rooms? Was there too many, and could hundreds be spared? then why had some one Man many Livings? Was it because there were too many? or why might not many that seldom or never well could preach, be rather maintained, and eased? Was this to do as our Saviour commanded, *Pray ye to the Lord of the Harvest to send Labourers into his Harvest*? See Bishop *Jewel's* Sermon on that Text.

2. What had the Preachers done to merit silencing? I could fill up my Page with Queries; but I will keep close to the general Point. If they will not subscribe, declare, and swear such prescribed Forms; they are judged by the Law to be mute. The best is, they dissented from the Law; without Impeachment of their Loyalty to the King, for they would gladly have submitted to his Terms, and could not obey the Law, without any great Dishonour to the Legislative Power, for they only dissent from a few Men, who then could sway enow to do their Work.

They must not only do, but they must subscribe. Is that true of the same wise Lord Bacon? 'Their urging Subscriptions to their own Articles, is but *laceffere & irritare morbos Ecclesie*; which otherwise would spend and crush themselves —. And it is true, there are some which (as I am perswaded) will not easily offend by Inconformity, who notwithstanding make some Conscience to subscribe: Page 35. 'For they know this note of Inconstancy, and Defection from what they have long held, shall disable that Good which otherwise they would do.

'When they have done this, they must assent and consent, &c. *Non consensum querit, sed dissidium auget, qui quod factis praestatur, verbis exigit*: He seeketh not Union, but Division, which exacteth inwardly, that which Men are content to yield in outward Action, the same great Man still.

If some of the things themselves be small, yet it is not a small thing that is required of us about them, namely, a Declaration and Subscription, our unfeigned Assent, &c —. yea our quiet Submission to the use of them, as tolerable, sufficeth not (as we apprehend), &c. faith the wise and holy Mr. Corbet. Principles and Practices of the N.C. p. 13. I know all is sheltered under, and fathered upon the Law; but who invented, who formed these things? Had they the Catholick Spirit, Wisdom, Charity, Authority of the whole Church in them, to which all must yield Assent, and to whom all must consent, under peril? they could not but know there were and would be Dissents, and Disatisfactions; they could not but know these Injunctions could not be so pleasing to the generality of the Kingdom and Church, who had received the King's Declaration with such Applause and Gratulation. And here may the fifteenth Query of

Men are not Masters of their own Perswasions, and can not change their Thoughts as they please. He that believes any thing con-

cerning Religion, can't turn as the Prince commands him, or accommodate himself to the Law, or his present Interests, except he turn Atheist, &c. Reverend Dr. Burnet's Preface before the History of the Rights of Prince, pag. 49.

3. Whether it doth not imply, that if a Man assent to all Articles of Faith, to the Doctrine of the Apostles concerning the Authority of the Magistrate, concerning Decency and Order, and things indifferent, and be otherwise fitted for preaching the Gospel, and Administration of all Ordinances; yet except he do assent and consent to all things required by

by some modern Bishops, and Clergy-men, it shall avail him nothing, he shall be incapable to officiate : and whether these modern Church-men do not set up themselves above, and exercise an Authority to dictate, most absolute, and higher than the Apostles did, who were next to Christ himself?

4. Suppose a Man be a lawfully ordained Minister, *i. e.* by Bishops, as many of the *Nonconformists* are ; or able, and fit, in respect of soundness of Faith, Utterance, Aptness to teach ; and be scrupulous of the Truth of some Proposition which is no Article of Faith, or of some Ceremony, and Modes of Practice ; is it not hard that for some Weakness of Understanding, he cannot assent to what is formed by others not infallible, that he should be incapable of the Exercise of the Ministry, and the Church deprived of his other Abilities ; for that Mistake, Weakness, or call it Error ? Our Saviour bore with his Disciples, when he reprov'd them ; *Are ye yet without Understanding ?* and did not turn them out.

5. Whether Assent and Consent, to some human Laws, Rites and Ceremonies, upon which neither Faith, nor Unity depends, be not hereby made more necessary for Exercise and Practice, than the assenting to Articles of Faith, or than preaching the Gospel, or by consequence, the Salvation of Immortal Souls ? It is true, there is a vast difference in the nature of the things ; but as to Capacity and Incapacity to minister in the holy Office, it is all one, for a Man to refuse Assent and Consent to every thing, as it is to an Article of the Creed.

6. Or that Conformity to Order, and the use of the Liturgy, a monthly Sermon, or a Homily, is more for the Edification of the Church ; than diligent and constant preaching, without a particular Assent to all, every thing ? Which (I will freely speak it) can be affirmed by none, but a Man that sets light by his own Salvation, and never personally conversed with his own Flock, or knows the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace, or Eternal Life, or the Practice of the Primitive Church.

Hitherto I have laboured to open the nature of the Cause of these Proceedings against our Protestant Brethren, and it is their Nonconformity, passive and active ; the first of which is a refusal of the modern Terms of Church-Freedom ; the second is a worshipping of God in Christ, according to the Rule of the Holy Scripture, as nearly as they can discern it ; and after the common, either allowed, or not disallowed manner of the Reformed Protestant Churches, and particular this of *England* : And in what they do, they follow the same Rule, and act from the same Principles, which our first Reformers professed, and their learned Defenders have maintained : And three Questions shall take up the whole of what's to follow.

1. Whether they, the Protestant *Nonconformists*, justly deserve to be silenced, suppressed, and punished, as they have been, and are?
2. Whether they are not at least to be permitted, and indulged?
3. Whether we ought not to unite and become one, by removal, or abating the things, that divide and break us? so that we may hold mutual, and actual Communion in the same Exercises of Religion, without fear of offending our Superiours thereby, or any other?

So much hath not been spoken of the first Question in the *Second Plea*, but that much more may be produced, to encline, if not draw the sensible Reader to the right side of the Question.

1. It is clear that they are not deposed and prosecuted for such Crimes as were meritorious of Deposition in the Ancient Church by their Canons; those Crimes were Fornication, Perjury, Theft. 'Let a Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon, convicted of Fornication, Perjury, or Theft, be deposed, but with caution that he be not separated, *i. e.* from the Communion of the Canons, called the *Apostles Canons*. Faithful, as *Balsamon* expounds, & *non segregetur*; adding a Reason for this Moderation, that no Man be punished twice for the same Fault, as saith the Scripture, *Nab. 1. 9.* as the learned Mr. *Beweredge*, in his Notes upon those Canons, hath observed. Is it likely these should be Canons of the Apostles, contrary to *1 Cor. 5. 11*? Or if they be genuine and ancient, how disagreeing is the modern Usage of the *Nonconformists*, who are convicted of no such Crimes, according to the ancient Canons, but yet who are for their Nonconformity punished in several Courts, and several times, and ways? Deposition is judged Punishment sufficient, saith *Zonaras*; so *Aristenus*, for to subject to a double punishment, *omnino inhumanum est*, is altogether inhuman. 'Other Canons command a Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon to be deposed, that beat offending Believers, or Infidels, that have done wrong. *Can. 27.* If a Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon obtain his Dignity with Money, let him be deposed, and he that ordained him; *Can. 29.* If a Bishop have made use of Secular Princes to obtain a Church, let him be deposed, and excommunicated. If a Presbyter, contemning his own Bishop, shall separate from him, and set up an Altar without Cause, or blameless, either in respect of Religion, or Justice, let him be deposed; *Can. 31.* But this is not the Case of our *Nonconformists*. *Duarenus* reckons the deposing and ejecting Crimes to be, 1. Simoniack Ambition. 2. Incontinency. 3. Perjury. 4. Manslaughter. 5. Treason. 6. Or besides these Crimes, any *legal* Infamy. But *Panormitan* admonisheth, that they were not to observe the Severity of the ancient Canons, because the Men of this Age, are not like those ancient Men, or Men of ancient Times. *Duaren. de sacris Eccles. Ministris,*

Minist'ris, &c. l. 8. c. 6. There are other Causes, which touch not our Brethren, but other Men much nearer.

2. In what they do, they proceed upon Principles common to all Christians, and Protestant Churches, in taking the Word of God for their Rule, as a divine and perfect Rule. 'The Christian Faith, as they (of the Church of Rome) had explained it, was a *Submission to the Church*. The Reforming, finding that this was the Spring of all their Errors, and that which gave them Colour and Authority, did on the other hand, set up the Strength of their whole Cause on an explicit believing the Truth of Scriptures, because of the Authority of God, who had revealed them, saith the Reverend Dr. Burnet —. It were easy to be copious on this Argument; 'They who began the Reformation, laboured in translating, and publishing the Scriptures; and would have all their Doctrines tried by them. The Reverend *Bilson* bids the Papists, Prove your Religion and Service (which you stoutly and falsely term Catholick) to be commanded by Christ, or else Women and Children, be they never so silly, will collect by the manifest Words of our Saviour, that their Promise in Baptism, doth straitly bind them from believing your Errors, and admitting your Masses, until you shew good and effectual Warrant out of the Word of God, that you do what Christ did, and teach what he taught, *without adding or altering any jot*. For this is the Duty that Baptism requireth of us, to believe no Teacher but one, which is Christ, to follow no Stranger, to regard and obey no Lord or Law-maker in the Church, but only the Son, whom the Father appointed to be Master and Leader, and Ruler of the Gentiles.

History of the Reformation Book 3. p. 286.

Subject. part 1. foregoing to Religion, p. 18.

This being a Principle common to all the Protestant Reformers, they who hold it and no other repugnant to it, or inconsistent with it, every true Protestant must needs hold they ought not to be punished for walking after it. And suppose any particular Man, or Denomination of Men err in their Superstructures, and Consequences; yet whether that Error be not a tolerable Error, and not a punishable Crime, which is consistent with Piety and Charity, may be left to the Judgment of every charitable Christian.

Jewel's Apolog. c. 16. *Divis.* 1, 2. C. 17. *Divis.* 1, 2.

3. According to this Rule and Principle, they frame their Worship, and model their Government and Discipline, and they that keep to that, though by different Schemes, having their Flaws and Failings, they cannot err a damnable Error; and if not damnable, it is want of Charity that will judge it intolerable. And there are those General Rules

and

and Directions, which direct us as by a Patern; they direct us to our End, God's Glory, and mutual Edification; the outward manner, Decency and Order: and altho in particular Decencies and Rules of Order, there may be a Diversity, yet all agree about Order; and the greatest Disagreement is in some Points of Decency, which are but

*The Means by Christ,
the Spring and Princip-
le, the holy Spirit, the
Matter, Word and Sa-
craments, Traditions,*
p. 844.

Accidents, which are no Parts of Divine Worship, as the Reverend Bishop *Abbot* writes, in Defence of Mr. *Perkins*, and do properly and immediately respect Men. It is a hard Case to punish all Men that are not of the same Complexion, or that cannot see alike clearly, tho they walk with us in the same way, of Faith, and Holiness, and Peace. The

Church of Christ never bred *that Notion*, that Church-Unity and Communion doth consist in Accidents, no more than Humane Nature, in Complexion, Shape, Stature; or of Children in Cloaths of the same Colour, Fashion, Length, &c.

4. And once again; they are punished for Nonconformity; and besides, what hath been said elsewhere, in particular; besides the Consideration of the wicked Design, Sedition, Rebellion and Schism, and the odious Pretence, take the Law in the Strictest Sense of it, *and any Exercise of Religion in other manner, than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England*, seems to be forbidden by it. It seems to be unsafe for any to punish upon this Law; and it is hard to be punished by it; it signifies something, but certainly what, is very dubious. For in the Liturgy, *i. e.* Book of Common-Prayer, there are two things only. 1. Rules, Directions, and Orders, called Rubricks. 2. The Parts of the Worship and Ceremonies, ordered, prescribed, and directed by them. It seems the meaning of the Law is, That no other Exercise of Religion shall be lawful without the Common-Prayer, both Matter and Rites, according to the Rubrick; but then, the Words of the Act agree not; because the Practice of the Church, in many Places, is different from the manner of the Liturgy, as others have proved by Instances. The Practice of all Cathedrals may not be alike, for ought I know. The Practice of the Cathedral and Parish-Churches, are not the same, as all Men know; nor of one Parish like another, while so many go beyond the Rule; the Practice of some Churches, and Colledge-Chappels, and some Chappels differ from others; some reading all *Psalms* and *Canticles* and Chapters on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*; and others reading only some Prayers and the Litany: * And yet the Law for all these places is the same. The Law is uniform, but the Practice multiform: But if

* And this is according to the manner of the Church of England in *Q. Eliz. days*, Vid. *Injunct.* 48, An. 1559.

the use of the Book, both Rules and Things ordered by it, be enjoined, then it seems strange that the Words should be *after the manner of the Church of England*; for suppose any should compose a Form of Worship, begin with some apt Sentences of Scripture, then go to an Exhortation to Confession, but use another Confession; and throughout observe the Rubrick, but not the same number of Psalms, nor the same Canticles, and Lessons, or one of the three, or ancient Creeds, and other Prayers; whether this would not be, tho not the same things, yet after the manner of the Church of *England*, as being after the same Order. But take the words as before, That no Exercise of Religion to above four and the Family shall be lawful, except they use the Common-Prayer. Then may some be apt to think, that,

1. Here is a Conformity allowed by this Act, to overthrow and weaken that required by the Act of Uniformity. I query; If a Minister shall in any publick place, so he be neither Parson, Vicar, or Stipendary, read the Common-Prayer, altho he do not subscribe, nor declare Assent and Consent, whether he may not lawfully preach to as large an Assembly as will hear him? And so may not a Man that is a *Nonconformist*, in respect of Subscription and Declaration, lawfully preach, as publickly as he can? and so be a legal *Nonconforming Conformist*; as honest Mr. C. called himself; and whether this Act doth not strike at the Act of Uniformity?

2. Doth it not cast an ill look upon all other Modes of Divine Worship, as if no other Form were consistent with the Peace of the Kingdom, but what is according to the Liturgy?

3. That all that dissent from all things in the Liturgy, are Persons to be suspected of the King, except such as say, or hear the Liturgy, and for that Cause are not; and by Consequence, whether the Execution of it doth not clearly tend to divide between the King and his Subjects, and between Subject and Subject; yea, to make them that are religious appear more formidable than the irreligious?

4. And whether it is not to set up a manner of Worship composed by Men, above the *matter of Worship* appointed by God? for let the Worship as to the Matter and End and Principle be divine, it is not tolerable, except it be after that one Manner and Practice. I'll add no more Doubts and Prejudices, but come to plain Argument.

They who ought to be encouraged and protected by the King of *England*, as Supream Governour, ought not to be punished: But our Protestant *Nonconformists* ought to be encouraged and protected: Therefore, &c.

They who set up no false and Idolatrous Worship, contrary to the Word of God, that worship God according to his Word, ought to be encouraged

couraged and protected by the King of *England*, as Supream Governour, and his Laws. But such is their Worship (in every part;) Therefore, &c.

I'll touch the *Minor* first, and then go to the Proposition: That Worship which agrees in the right Object, of Scripture-matter, according to Scripture, and to divine Ends, is true Worship: but such is their Worship. Therefore, &c.

To multiply no more Syllogisms; I prove the Proposition by the constant Uniform, allowed Doctrine of the Church of *England*. And to strike home at one blow, thus I argue:

They who ought to be encouraged and protected, and not punished, according to the *allowed Doctrine* of the Church of *England*, explaining the King's Supremacy, ought not to be punished by any new or subsequent Law, that doth not condemn that allowed Doctrine of the Church, as this Act doth not. But according to the allowed Doctrine of the Church of *England*, explaining the King's Supremacy; they, and such as they, are to be encouraged and protected: Therefore &c.

This is the Proposition I am to prove, the *Major* being clear.

Those Reverend Fathers of the Reformed Religion, which disputed against the Pope's, and proved the King's Supremacy, did thus state and explain it, in the necessary Erudition of a Christian Man.

Set forth by Hen. 8th.

Vid. Dr. Bur. 1 Vol.

History of the Reformz.

P. 142.

To them specially and principally it pertaineth to defend the Faith of Christ, and his Religion, to conserve and maintain the true Doctrine of Christ, and all such as be true Preachers and Setters-forth thereof; and to abolish Abuses, Heresies, and Idolatries, and to punish with Corporal Pains, such as of Malice be the occasion of the same; and finally to over-see, and cause that the said Bishops and Priests do execute their Pastoral Office truly and faithfully, and specially in these Points, which by Christ and his Apostles were given and committed to them; and in case they shall be negligent in any part thereof, or would not diligently execute the same, to cause them to redouble and supply their Lack; and if they obstinately withstand their Prince's kind Monition, and will not amend their Faults, then and in such Case to put others in their room and places. And God hath also commanded the said Bishops to obey with all Humbleness and Reverence, both Kings, and Princes, and Governours, and all their Laws, not being contrary to the Laws of God, whatsoever they be, and that not only propter Iram, but also propter Conscientiam. With this Doctrine all our best Writers of unquestionable Authority agree: See Jewel's Apology, Part 1. p. 15. Edit. 1570. Apol. c. 11. Divis. 3. cut down Groves, break down Images, coerce and chastise Negligence, and Falshood of the Bishop, pag. 715. Josbua also Ap. c. 11. Divis. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11. c. 15. Divis. 1, 3. c. 17. Divis. 1, 2. — The Reproof of Mr. Dorman,

with

with a Defence of the chief Government of Christian Princes, by Dr. *Alexander Nowel*, London, 1566. p. 24. b. p. 131, 143, 161. b. Dr. *Jo. Rainold's* Conference with *Hart*, c. 10. 'We never affirmed that Princes might command what God forbiddeth, or *prohibit what God commandeth*. Bishops have their Authority to preach and administer the Sacraments from Christ himself — ; only the Prince giveth them publick Liberty without let or disturbance to do what *Christ commandeth* —. Princes suffer and incite them with Peace and Praise to do their Duties —. Princes may by their Laws prescribe the Christian Faith to be preached, the right Service of God *in Spirit and in Truth to be used*, the Sacraments to be administered, *according to the Lord's Institution* —. *Bilson* of Subjection, pag. 216, 217, &c. 'We say that Princes, as publick Magistrates, may give Freedom, Protection, and Assistance to the preaching of the Word, ministring the Sacraments, and right using of the Keys, pag. 227, 236, 240, 249. See Bishop *Bridges* of the Supremacy against *Stapleton*, and *Saunders*, p. 672, 673. I'll quote no more of him.

There is neither Idolatry in Worship, nor Heresy in the Faith of the *Nonconformists*, for which they ought to be restrained, nor Ungodliness and Dishonesty, for which they should be punished, any more than the best of Men : But worshipping the true God in Christ by the Spirit according to his Word, &c. By the foregoing Doctrine they are to be encouraged and protected. There is but one thing to their Prejudice, their Disobedience to some Temporal Ecclesiastical Laws, requiring Subscriptions, &c. Hear a little further the Doctrine of the Bishops and Doctors. 'To devise Rites and Ceremonies for the Church is not the Prince's Vocation, but to receive and allow such as the Scriptures and Canons commend, and such as the Bishops and Pastors of the Place shall advise, not infringing the Scriptures or Canons. And for all other Ecclesiastical Things and Causes, Princes be neither the Devisers nor Directors of them, but the Confirmers and Establishers of that which is good, and Displacers and Avengers of *Bilson*, pag. 252. that which is Evil —. The Ceremonies in divers particular Churches, are of divers sorts, and that without any Inconvenience at all, so they all agree in those unchangeable Laws, given by the Universal Head, Christ. The Reverend Dr. *Nowel's* Reproof of *Dorman*, p. 25. See *Homil.* of Fasting, second Part. How easy may the Bishops if they pleased, take away the Causes of our decried Schism? or without any Crime of Schism, permit a Diversity, to them that are governed by the unchangeable Law of Jesus Christ? and only differ from their particular and changeable Laws.

To conclude; If the Faith of the *Nonconformists* be the Catholick Faith, (as it is in all and every Point and Article, even the same which

is professed in the Church of *England*) contained in the Scriptures; if they are good Men, and honest Subjects; 'Then we are taught and exhorted to pray, that the King, and all in Authority under him, may have Wisdom, Strength, Justice, Clemency, and **Zeal to God's Glory**, 'to God's Verity, to Christian Souls, and the Common-wealth. Let us 'pray they may rightly use their **Sword** and Authority, for the Maintenance and Defence of the *Catholick Faith*, contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, and of their good and honest Subjects, for the Fear and Punishment of 'the evil and vicious People.

The 3d part of the Homily of Obedience, p 69. Lond. Edit. 1673.

Object. But they transgress the Laws, therefore are not good and honest Subjects, break the Orders of the Church, &c.

Answer. Preaching and hearing the Catholick Faith, is, I hope, no Transgression of the Laws: if it be, then, you do in effect say the Laws are against Godliness, and the Exercise of the Catholick Faith. They are good and honest Subjects, that pray for the King, pay Tribute, live in Godliness and Honesty; therefore they are to be protected and encouraged, which was the Proposition to be proved. I suppose no Law ought to be construed, or executed, which in Construction and Execution is contrary to the Catholick Doctrine of the Church of *England*, established by Law. The Faith they profess is Catholick, their Worship is according to the Scripture, and they corrupt the People neither with Sedition, or Disobedience. The Conditions of Liberty which they refuse, are no Article of Catholick Faith or Practice; therefore they ought not to be punished, according to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

The second Question is, Whether the *Nonconformist* Protestants are not to be indulged and permitted?

The former Discourse answers this Question. If they do not deserve to be punished, but protected and encouraged; then they ought to be permitted and indulged, while they design and act nothing inconsistent with, or contrary to the Duties of good, honest, peaceable Subjects.

2. Permission and Indulgence is the lowest degree of Favour that can be shewed to Catholick Christians and Protestants in a Christian Protestant Kingdom.

1. If more be due to the Profession of Christian Religion, yea, of the Protestant Religion: Then a Permission, or Indulgence, is the least Respect and Favour due to it. But more is due to it than Permission; therefore that's the least.

2. If Permission was due to Godliness and Honesty from adverse Powers, both Jewish and Heathen; and if it be due to Reformed Christians,

stians, in Popish Countries; then it is much more due to Protestant Professors in Protestant Kingdoms and States: But the former is true; therefore much more the latter.

Of these in particular:

1. The Jewish Powers ought to have permitted the preaching of the Gospel to our Saviour and his Apostles, because it was of God; and God hath Sovereign Power in all the World, to set up his Kingdom, and Laws. It was the Sin of the Jews to forbid the preaching of the Gospel; it was a Duty in the Apostles to preach it, even when forbidden. If it was a Sin in the Jews to forbid it, they ought certainly to permit it; yea, they ought to have received and obeyed it. If it had been a Duty, (and no Sin) in the Jews to forbid the preaching of Christ, it had been a Sin in the Apostles notwithstanding, and against that Prohibition, to preach it. But it was an Obedience to God (the higher Power) to preach it; therefore they who forbade it, ought to permit it, yea much more, it was their Duty to believe it.

2. The same Reason will hold all the World over; because Christian Religion is from God, and teaches the Knowledge, and Obedience, and Worship of God, and the way to Life; therefore God may send it all over the World by Men called and sent by him, without the Commission of the Powers of the World. And if Men knew the Gift of God, they ought to esteem it the greatest Mercy, and manifestation of Grace, that was ever shewed to the Sons of Men.

Our Saviour commands his Apostles to go into all the World, to preach the Gospel to every Creature. It comes among them without their Knowledge, and against their Wills: Ought it to be received or not? if not, then God ought not to be obeyed according to his revealed Will, which no Man dare affirm: if it ought to be received, it ought to be permitted and indulged with an overplus of Reverence and Honour. Godliness and Honesty was to be privileged, and protected, to be cherished, and not extinguished in Heathen Kingdoms: *1 Tim. 2. 2.* They desired to lead quiet Lives, free from Trouble and Persecution, the use they were to make, and did make of their Quietness, was the Exercise of Godliness and Honesty. To this end they were to pray for Kings, and all in Authority: And Kings, and all in Authority, may venture and not fear to give Protection and Security to all that pray for them, and that live in Godliness and Honesty under them. If protection and Quietness might be expected from Heathens, much more from Christians.

3. If Reformed Christians ought to be permitted in Popish Kingdoms and States; then Christians professing the Reformation, may be much more permitted in Protestant Kingdoms and States, and by Consequence,

quence in this Kingdom. Popish Kings and Rulers ought to receive, and obey the Truth, and to believe no more than what Christ hath commanded to be believed, and to worship God according to the Will of Christ. Shall we say the Protestants in *France* do not hold the Faith, nor worship God according to the Gospel? then what are they who say so? If they profess and believe the Truth, they ought to be permitted, that's plain, for the Truth's sake, and for the Lord's sake. Doth Christian Love and Compassion prompt us, to wish our persecuted Brethren in *France* enjoyed the Liberty of the true Religion there? and if they should enjoy a Freedom there, shall we deny a Liberty to Protestant Brethren here? I can see no way to avoid a Justification of the barbarous Usage of Protestants there, by them that prosecute Protestants here, for far lesser Differences from our Establishments, than theirs from the Papists. Suppose an Ambassador was sent to treat with the *French* King, at this time of Prosecution of our Native Protestants, for a Cessation of that cruel Persecution: how readily might an Answer be made, Why may not I suppress Hereticks, when in *England* you suppress Protestants?

4. A Diversity of Order and Manner of Discipline and Worship, may be as well permitted without breach of Church-Unity in the same Nation, as in divers Nations, without breach of Christian and Catholick Unity. If different Forms of Belief are allowed, the matter being divine, and the one more large and explicit than others; why may not different Modes and Order of Discipline and Worship be allowed and permitted? Our Worship is according to our Faith; as we believe, so we worship: Notwithstanding our use of three Forms of Profession of our Faith, we agree in one Faith; so in different Forms of Worship we agree in one Evangelical Worship: And our Reformers might with as great Reason have pitched upon one of the three Creeds, and for Uniformity sake, required Assent to that, and the use of that and no other, as our Modern Fathers pitch upon one Form of Worship, and require our Assent and Use of that, and no other. For Uniformity in Faith is more necessary than Uniformity in Orders and Rites. We use the Creed called the Apostles, *Athanasian*, and *Nicen* Creed. Bishop *Jewel* hath written a larger Form, in his Apology for the Church of *England*, agreeing in Words with neither; and, in his Reply to *Harding*, reckons up eight Forms, composed by several Authors and Fathers. *Harding*, cavilling against his Declaration of our Faith, (as many in our days exclaim against Dissenters,) said, *In our Fathers days, Christian People lived in perfect Unity, &c. before Luther's New Gospel*. But let us learn from our Reverend Father *Jewel*, that Unity of Faith may agree

Apol. 2d part, 1. c.
Divers. 1. Diversity of
Creeds, fol. 38.

agree with Diversity of Forms of Faith ; and by Consequence, with Diversity of Forms of Worship.

Object. But the Administration of God's Worship ought to be uniform in one Nation ; and variety of Rites in one National Church, would Cause Division of Judgment, and by Consequence Division of Affection ; and to tolerate divers ways of Administrations, would be to tolerate matter of perpetual Discord and Schism.

Answer. Besides what the learned and acute Sir *Thomas Overbury* answers to a part of the matter of this Objection, *p. 106.* and the Commissioners in the *Savoy* ; I'll *Account of Proceedings, p. 8, 9.* return my Answer, in two things. 1. Without Controversy, our Lord Jesus took care for the Preservation of Unity, such a Unity as is necessary among his Disciples ; and yet took no such Course as these Men build all Unity upon. 2. The Church of *Corinth* was doubtless a particular Church, and according to the Sense of the Reverend Bishop *Bilson*, quoted before, there was no Form of Liturgy prescribed, *p. 619, 620.*

To be short, Multitudes of learned and able Men, living in one Kingdom, have diversity of Apprehensions and Notions of things, as well as in divers Nations ; and except Uniformity of Words might produce an inward Uniformity of Conceptions, it hath not that Influence upon Unity as some Men think, by their too violent urging of it.

3. I am for Uniformity according to General Rules, not excluding Prudence, which must judge what's necessary, what's expedient, what's edifying, or what not : for to exclude Prudence, is to limit Divine Providence to particular Rules. Divine Providence proceeds from Sovereignty ; Prudence observes it, and Conscience must obey it : Saving the Dominion of Providence, and the Exercise of Ministerial Prudence, let's be as uniform as we can. This prudential Latitude is allowed to every Curate, in the choice of Homilies, in dividing them, leaving a part for the After-noon, and changing of Lessons, reading one for another, as shall be most for Edification, in the Admonition to all Ecclesiastical Ministers before the second part of the Homily.

To conclude this Question ; I desire the violent and active, and the violent and oppressive Disputants of these times, to answer, Whether they think that our Protestant-Dissenting-Brethren, that preach the Faith, and labour to convert and build up precious Souls, are unworthy to enjoy Liberty to preach the Gospel, or to enjoy their Estates, or to live in *any part of the World* ? If not, what ground have they for their ill Opinion ? What Christian Charity have they ? How do they conspire with Bloody Inquisitors, and *French* Persecutors ! yea *Irish* Rebels, and Inhuman Rooters out of Heresy ! But if not worthy to live among

us, retaining their Liberty of Conscience and Religion, Whither shall they go? Where are they like to find more natural Affection, than among their Native Country-men and Acquaintance? Where shall they be more wel-come? among the Papists? among Infidels, where Satan bears so much Rule? or among Protestants abroad? Alas, where! who can entertain them? Would you banish them to *Scotland, Ireland?* there are too many already? Whither would you have them go (for they are bid begon, if they'll not conform, by some) where they may do good? there's work enough for them, where-ever they are? Why may they not do good here among us? To be short, they who turn them out of their Hearts, and Charity, upon the same reason banish them out of the Land, if not out of the World: And what if they should say as their Ejectors do, We had better live or be in any Land or Nation, even among the Papists or Infidels, than live among such as these: Would it not sound worse than all that yet they have said? And what a Division, or Schism at the very root, would that be, if it grew to it? Which it hath not done, and I wish never may. But we may see that Violence is a Wedge to make the most ghastly Schism that ever was seen in a Christian Church.

But rather than be guilty of so unpeaceable and uncharitable a Thought or Carriage, capable of such a Construction, which all Christians should as ill endure to lodge within them as the Devil himself, or expose our Brethren to Temptations and Sufferings; let us all most earnestly pray for Peace and Union, and lay aside all Thoughts and Passions, which are the beginnings of Schism. And so I come to the last Query.

Query 3. Whether we ought not to unite as above said, and so to unite, and become one, by the removal or abating the things which divide and break us, so that we may hold mutual and actual Communion in the same Exercise of Religion, without fear of offending our Superiours or any other?

That we ought to unite, is the Cry and Voice of all, in whom Christianity doth but faintly breath, and the Spirit of God hath any effect or Interest; but the *Quomodo* is most difficult, in this, as in many other Operations. I have betrayed my self, and discovered my poor Opinion in the very Question, by *removing and abating the things which divide and break us*. But it appears clear to my Apprehension, that no other way or means will ever do. If the Dissenters should be miraculously convinced, or charmed into a Consent; then that which was a Cause of dissent, is become as no Cause: and while their Understandings stand at this distance, and they be but sincere and obedient, and honest to their own Thoughts and Judgments, they can never come over to us; and to use force without Reason, is the way to drive them from God, when we pretend to drive them to Church. Would we have them act against the settled

settled Dictates of their Conscience? and is Force the way to convince the Conscience? And really what hath been offered to inform their Understandings, hath been ineffectual to that End. Is it likely such Writings that convey neither Love nor distinctive Reasonings, will ever persuade Men, better studied in their own Case, than they that unite against them? Is it likely that a display of Words, and sounding the Trumpets, not to call the Congregation together, to unite in Love and Peace, but to alarm People, to arm themselves, and to watch as against Seditious Persons, will ever encourage them to come in and unite with us? We must argue from better Topicks, than Sarcasms, Flouts, Mockery, Emulation, Wrath and Reviling; these Deeds of the Flesh will never allure Men to walk with us in one Spirit.

There are large Encomiums of Unity and Peace, and every part of the Encomium, or praise of it, contains an Argument to persuade us to it. And two mighty Arguments should at this time prevail with us, * Necessity, and Self-preservation; we see our apparent Dangers by being scattered abroad, like an Army in a Rout, or Disorder, or Tumult, while our Potent Enemies are united against us. We cry out upon Dissenters as factious, but were it not for a Factious Spirit

** Since this was written, I had the Right Reverend Bishop of Cork, use the two Arguments in terminis, p. 29 of the first (excellent) Sermon.*

among our selves, they had never been thus broken and separated from us. Our Life, our Delights, our Happiness, doth consist in, or spring from Union; after this our Desires do run or fly, they move at no slower rate: Our Death, Sorrows, Grievs, and Unhappiness doth follow our Separation from the things, wherein Life, Delight and Happiness consist. A divided State is an unhappy State; Charity is the Bond of Perfectness; when Charity dies, then the Church is like a Princely Family broke up, dispersed and divided. They who do not love, cannot unite, but make a Breach, and Separation. The uncharitable Man is the factious Man. *To impute Factiousness to one Party, who would unite, but cannot, and to excuse another who may unite, but will not, is to judge with too apparent a Partiality for an equal Judge.* Had the upper side, but the very same Reasons and Arguments, which now the oppressed use and urge for themselves, they would be of Authority, and very considerable, if not unanswerable; whereas now they are look'd upon as weak, and scorned as ridiculous. Favour and Authority gives Force and Weight to the Reasons of them that enjoy the benefit of the Favour; and when Persons are exposed to Contempt, their strongest argnings are despised as weak, and their loudest Complaints are not heard, but rebuked as causeless, and themselves branded as a Faction, tho they are Catholick and Loyal in their Faith and Principles. And this is plain, the *Noncon-*

formists have found it so; their Arguings, Representations, Complaints (which have been but few) Motions, Supplications, Apologies have been despised, because they are despised and low in the World, and a worldly Interest keeps them down. I have sometimes thought, that if Authority had been against the use of the Cross, and commanded Mr. Parker to write his Book against it, then he had been dignified with the Epithets, that Mr. Hooker hath been adorned with, of the Judicious Parker, and the Profound Parker, and the Excellent Parker, whereas being on the decried side, he hath been often laughed at. The greatest number of Men consider more the Condition of the Person, than the thing spoken or written by him; and give him the greatest Honour, by whom they may receive a Favour. From this Partiality a Faction grows up and thrives exceedingly, when it is fatned by the Richness of the Soil, and influenced from some that sit above; and hence it comes, even from Partiality and Faction, that the imputation of Faction is constantly thrown upon Dissenters, because they do not what they cannot do with a good Conscience according to their Light. But if all of us would set up God's Glory, the Edification of his Church, Truth, Peace, and Union in the middle as a Center, and all of us that are scattered and divided in the Circumference, run up to it, by the Lines of Scripture-Rules, then God would be more glorified

*Vid. Cypr. de simplici-
tate Clericorum—
Unitas servatur in O-
rigine—*

than he is, the Church more edified, and we more happy in Peace and Union than we are; or if we were all affected to glorify God, to edify the Church, and to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, as long as we agreed, and met in God as in a Center, and the Lines of Holy Scripture, tho we did not all run in on Line, in one Way, but different Ways. Our Diversity would be without Schism, and all our Divisions would be like the dispersing of a numerous Family without Alienation of Affection; like the Distribution of the Patriarchs into their several Tribes, inhabiting the Land of Canaan, all of the same Blood, the same Religion, in the same Covenant with God.

Towards this Union, we must consider;

- I. Wherein it consists.
- II. Remove the Causes of Division as much as possibly we can. The Causes of Division are, 1. Inward, 2. Outward, and apply our selves to the Means of Union.
- III. Wherein the nature of Schism doth properly consist.

I. The Persons united, are Christ and his Church, under the Denomination of his Members, his Body, and his Spouse, compared to several kinds of Union, as natural and political. Every Christian is united to Christ by the Spirit of Christ's working Faith, and Faith perceiving, or seeing Christ to be what he is; and what he is, made of God to us, doth attract Love to him, which is intire, sincere, fervent. By Faith and Love the renewed gracious Soul doth confederate with, and consent, and submit to Jesus Christ, according to the Articles of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace. Every Member of Christ is a part of the whole, and there is the same Spirit in all, they are all Members of Christ, and Members one of another, and that Spirit, Faith and Love, which unites to Christ, doth unite them one to another. This Union is from active operating Principles and Graces, which are quickened, and strengthened by the Spirit of Christ, making use commonly of outward Means and Ordinances to that End: And these Graces, or the New Man, so quickened and assisted, exercise that Power towards Christ and one another; and this mutual Exercise of Grace, is our Communion with Christ, and his with us, and of one towards another, according to our various Conditions, in mutual Care, Sympathy, Compassion, and Joy. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26.

This Communion with Christ, and one another, in this Life, is but imperfect, we understand but in part, and our Faith serves and helps us but in an imperfect State, and by Consequence our Love is weak, and other Graces are at best but in a growing Condition. Our Administrations, and Communion in Ordinances have great Imperfections, according to the weakness of our Perceptions, Light and Judgment, and other Graces. And suppose our Love were strong and intire to one another, yet in this bad Light, we are subject to many great Errors and Mistakes: And our Union and Agreement lies, 1. In one general End, God's Glory; 2. In one Common Principle of Operation, or Efficient Cause, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 3. In one way and means of Conveyance and Acceptation, Jesus Christ, as our Mediator and Advocate. 4. In one General Rule, the Holy Scriptures, and the Institutions of Jesus Christ the Law-giver; where there are these Ones, there is Catholick Unity: *There is one Body, and one Spirit; even as ye are called in one hope of your Calling; One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; One God and Father of all, which is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Ephes. 4. 4, 5, 6, &c. The ancient true Bonds of Unity, are one Faith, one Baptism, and not one Ceremony, one Polity, saith the Lord Bacon; our Disagreement is in the *Ubi supra.* p. 4. latter, we agree in the first and principal.

From this Union proceeds Communion; for, the Church, the Body of Christ, consisting of living Members, quickened by the renewing, sanctifying Spirit, and exercising the Graces received, have Communion with God through and by the Spirit; and with one another, as Children of the same Heavenly Father, and Subjects of the same Heavenly King, and Members of the same Family. And this Communion is held, maintained, exercised, and increased by Laws and Ordinances, in the Observation of which, there is a conveyance of many and great Privileges and Benefits.

This Union and Communion, is either inward or outward; inward, in being joined to the Lord, and to one another, in being of one Mind and Heart: Outward, and that's twofold: 1. In spiritual things. 2. In outward and carnal things.

1. In spiritual things. So the first Church, continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread and Prayers; Acts 2. 42. And they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking of Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness and Singleness of Heart, praising God, &c. Vers. 46, 47. And let us consider one another to provoke unto Love and to good Works, not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another. Heb. 10. 24, 25. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom, admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, &c. Col. 3. 16. Exhorting one another; Heb. 3. 13. Comforting one another; 1 Thess. 4. 18. Edifying one another; Chap. 5. 11. Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit; Ephes. 6. 18. Confessing their Faults one to another, and praying one for another, &c. James 5. 16.

2. In outward and carnal things; Acts 2. 44, 45. C. 4. 32, 34, 35. C. 5. 4. Heb. 13. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, &c. This kind of Communion is beside the Subject now in hand.

It is said, there can be no Union without Communion: be it so. Is not that Communion both of Churches, Pastors and Persons, a sufficient Communion to free any Churches or Persons from the Guilt of Schism, which is answerable and proportionable to the Union of the Body of Christ, and agreeable to the Institutions and Ordinances of Christ? His Ordinances are sufficient Means and Instances of Communion, without any Additions of Forms and Ceremonies; we have his Law, and Form of Admission into his Family and Church, Baptism: And being baptized by one Spirit into one Body; we have his Word, which is sufficient to make us wise unto Salvation, and to make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good Work; we have a Form and Pattern of Prayer, and Directions and Matter for all manner of Prayer; we have a Sacrament for Communion and Confirmation;

we have what Christ thought sufficient Means of Communion in all and every Nation that should receive the Gospel; and by Consequence for the universal, and every particular Church. And it is observed, what the Spirit of Christ did to preserve Unity, and prevent Schism. He gave diversities of Gifts, for divers Administrations and Operations: The Church is compared to a Body, consisting of different Members, in Subordination, for Service and Usefulness; some to do the Office of an Eye, others of an Ear; some of a Hand, others of a Foot; some honourable, and some dishonourable, that there should be no Schism in the Body, *1 Cor. 12.* He inspired holy Men, and they spake as inspired by him, but not the same form of Words, without a great variety, not the same Form of Prayer in the same Words and Syllables; no not the same Form of Words to a word in the Institution of the Lord's Supper; *St. Mark* leaves out, *Drink ye all of it*; *Mark 14. 23.* and for Remission of Sins, ver. 24. *St. Luke* adds to, *This is my Body, given for you, Do this in Remembrance of me*; *Chap. 22. 19, & 20.* to the Cup, which is shed for you; and not as the other two Evangelists. And *St. Paul* delivers to the *Corinthians*, what he received from the Lord, and adds to *St. Matth.* and *Mark*, and varies from *St. Luke*, *This is my Body which is broken for you*, and keeps the words of *St. Luke*, *In Remembrance of me*; but adding, *As oft as ye do it in Remembrance of me*, after the Cup; *1 Cor. 11. 23, 24.* — If either of these Holy Apostles gave the Sacrament, using his own Words, and so it be delivered in four Forms; who will doubt but he holds Communion sufficient to the Ends of the holy Sacrament? And the Uniformity lies in Blessing and giving Thanks, in taking Bread, breaking it, giving and taking it, as a Token of the Body of Christ to the appointed End; and so also the Cup, as a Token of his Blood, drinking it to the appointed End. Uniformity of Words is not necessary to Church-Communion, neither in Articles of Faith, nor in Preaching, nor in Prayer, nor in Sacraments; and yet Church-Communion is as necessary a Duty, as associating of Churches and Assemblies, it being truly the End of such Association and Assembling: And yet no Man of sense will deny the great Advantages of Consent, Agreement, Similitude, and Uniformity in all our Administrations, as near as we can frame our Minds thereunto, which will never come nearer than according to general Rules, without Debates, and Disputes, as many, if not more, and of as great an Influence upon Peace, as can arise from the Application and Construction of General Rules.

II. Let us remove and take away the Causes of Disunion and Division as much as possibly we can.

And

And first, Those that are within us, which may be reduced to *Flesh and Self*. For whereas there is among you *Envyng, Strife and Divisions*, are ye not carnal and walk as Men? For while one saith, *I am of Paul*, and another, *I am of Apollo*, are ye not carnal? 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4. *Self* is the Schismatick within us, till we are converted from it, we are separate from Christ, and by Consequence are disunited from his Body, and do not consent to the Terms of his Covenant and Salvation, *Self-conceit, Pride, and Loftiness, Self-will, Self-seeking, and Self-love*, are the Springs of our bitter Waters of Strife and Separation, that run into divers Channels, or rather break the Banks, and overflow the Church.

2. The outward Causes are besides the Co-operation of the World and Devil, the rigorous exacting and enforcing of particular Conditions of Church-Liberty and Communion, with such Forfeitures and Penalties, as hinder the Progress of the Word of Life, and the Salvation of Souls: All our Wars have been before the Gates of the City, since many have been turned out; we say they shall not come in, except they will subscribe to Terms; and they say they cannot, except they are taken away: Both Sides must found a Parlee; and our Governours have the greatest, and most imitable prevailing Example of the King of his Church, and his Apostles. Hear our Homily.

Homily of Fasting 1st
part, p. 172, 173. Edit.
Lond. 1673.

‘God’s Church ought not, neither may it be so
‘tied to that, or any other Order now made, or
‘hereafter to be made and devised by the Authority of Man, but that it may lawfully for just Causes, alter, change, or
‘mitigate those Ecclesiastical Decrees and Orders; yea, *recede wholly*
‘*from them*, and break them, when they tend either to Superstition, or
‘to Impiety, when they draw People from God, rather than work any
‘Edification in them (and not in these Cases alone, as you shall hear
‘afterwards). This Authority Christ used for the Order and Decree
‘made by the Elders for washing oft-times —, tending to Superstition,
‘our Saviour changed into the Sacrament of Regeneration. This Authority, *To mitigate Laws and Decrees Ecclesiastical*, the Apostles practised —. *Acts 15.* signifying, they would not lay any other Burden upon
‘them, but these Necessaries —. Thus ye have heard that Christian
‘Subjects are bound to obey, even in Conscience, sincere Laws, which
‘are not repugnant to the Laws God —. Ye have heard that Christ’s
‘Church is not so bound to observe any Order, Law, or Decree made by
‘Man: *To prescribe a Form in Religion*; but that the Church hath full
‘Power and Authority from God to change and alter the same, when
‘need shall require, &c. Was there ever greater need than now? Love
‘of Union, Peace and Growth of Godliness, Sense of imminent Danger,
‘and that Danger no less than Destruction, hath moved the Right Reverend

read Bishop of *Cork* to print those pressing Divine Sermons, and take his Testimony, (as carrying greater Authority than of private Men's) of the necessity of Union: speaking of the Protestants in *Ireland*, We must unite, or be destroyed. And how far is *Ireland* from *England*? Can the Protestant Church in *Ireland* be destroyed, and *England* be safe? Yea, how much further is the Destruction from *England*, than from *Ireland*? may not *England* be destroyed first? It is most likely: for if *England* be destroyed, *Ireland* cannot escape; if *Ireland* be destroyed, *England* will be endangered, but may better withstand it, than *Ireland* can. The same discerning and sensible Bishop cannot conceive any Possibility of an Union of all honest-minded Men of different Persuasions amongst us, that call themselves Protestants, but by the coming of such several Dissenters into the establish'd Church. Hence the Inference is not far to be fetched. That this Union can never be but by taking away the Bars, and the Chains that keep the Dissenters from entering in: Upon what Terms (saith that Right Reverend and Excellent Person) must we of the Establish'd Church come over to you, that dissent, or you come over to us? We declare, we cannot without Schism; and then adds a most generous Expression of a large and catholick Spirit: — But are ready to sacrifice all we can otherwise to the Publick Peace and Safety. O that all were thus frank, in their biddings for Peace and Union! But Right Reverend Father, Dissenting-Protestants and Independents, will never press you so far, as to come to them, that is, to be Presbyterians and Independents: If you will, do what you may without Schism; and they do what ever can be done with a good Conscience, the deadly Wound is in a hopeful way of cure.

Find out, first, what Unity is necessary for this imperfect State. 2. Observe what Rules Christ gave by his Spirit, and the Holy Apostles practised for Unity, against Schism, for Truth and Faith against Heresy, for Government against Confusion, for Order against Disorder, for Decency against Indecency, for Worship against Idolatry and Irreligion, for Discipline against decay of Piety, and for the soundness of its Members; in a word, for Admission into Communion and Privileges, for Edification, Peace, and Comfort. And what more can be necessary for Unity and Peace of Christians in one Nation, than what was sufficient for Christians in all Nations? And then there will be neither Schism on one hand, nor Dissent on the other. That one Rule of the Apostle, as far as we have attained, let us walk by the same Rule, would unite and heal us, and do us more Service than all the Volumes of Canons besides.

besides. And who can walk by the same Rule further than he hath attained?

The Means to be used for Union, are 1. A sincere Observation of, and conscientious Consent unto the Terms of our Christianity and Salvation, our Baptifmal Vow. Hypocrites and Formalists, are the first Rank of Dissenters, and Schismatics, that conform not unto the Laws of Christ, and Terms of Salvation. 2. A conscientious walking after the Spirit. Sensual Men, that have not the Spirit, are the notorious Separatists. 3. A studious search into, and keeping to the holy Gospel, wherein we are taught, as the way to Union.

1. A setting up, or rather acknowledgment of God, *as in all, and above all*; 1 Cor. 3.

2. An Imitation of Jesus Christ: *Phil. 2. 5.* in Humbleness of Mind and Condescension.

3. Unity of Mind in the Lord; *Phil. 4. 2.* 1 Cor. 1. 10. not contentious, striving in Parties, as if Christ were divided.

4. By Charity which suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh none Evil, rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but rejoyceth in the Truth. By these Divine Effects and Properties of Charity, we may lay our Divisions upon the Head of Uncharitableness: Charity keeps all together as in a Bond of Perfection: *Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another: 1 Rom. 12. 10. Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep with them that weep, ver. 15. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26.*

5. By Self-denial. This is the individual Property and Effect of true Faith and Love, and by Consequence the necessary Qualification of a Disciple. By this we seek God's Glory, and not our own; pray that *God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done*; as if we had no Interest nor Concernment in this World, but the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom; nor Work to do, but to do his Will. Except we deny our selves we cannot condescend, not seek the good of all, but please our selves; we cannot have a Care of one another as of our selves; we shall not seek the things that be of Christ, but our own. This Faction, this Schismatical Self must be denied, or we can never be healed, nor grow in one.

6. If we would unite, we must not aggravate Divisions, nor multiply Schisms in our own Fancies, Opinions and uncharitable Affections, looking upon diversity of Opinions, as hideous Errors; upon Errors as damnable; judging others as Deceivers, and deceived, and admiring our selves, as if priviledged with a little Infallibility; censuring our Brethren, reviling, reproaching, suppressing and persecuting of them.

Our

Our Union lies in a Point, it is in the Head, in the Essentials of Christianity, of Faith and Worship, and in *Amen*, as the Sum of our Prayers. An so Schism, pernicious Schism, lies in a narrower Compass, than most Men, I will not say, would have it ; but than most do lay it in.

And they were counted Schismatics, who separated from the Catholick Church, by Cyprian ad magnum, &c. August. &c.

Schism is a Breach of Union ; but then it is a Breach of that Union which ought to be among Christians, from the Nature and Laws of Christianity. But according to some, the weaker side is always the Schismatical.

And so I come to the last Head, to shew wherein Schism lies, or what Schism is : It hath many Branches, and Degrees ; but I'll take the most authentick Notion of it, from the prime Doctors and Fathers of the Church of *England*, by which I dare say, our Protestant Dissenters will be tried and judged. Hear the Canon, and let it be the Reed to measure our Schism by ; we may stand to their Rule, who made our Canons : *Anno 1603. Can. ix.* The Title is, *Authors of Schisms in the Church of England censured.*

‘ Whosoever shall hereafter separate themselves from the Communion of Saints, as it is approved by the Apostles Rules in the Church of *England*, and combine themselves together in a new Brotherhood, accounting the Christians who are conformable to the Doctrine, Government, Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, to be profane and unmeet for them to joyn with in Christian Profession ; let them be excommunicated, and not restored, but by the Arch-bishop, after their Repentance, and publick Revocation of such their wicked Errors.

Here's the Nature of culpable Separation opened. 1. It is a Separation from the Communion of Saints. 2. Communion of Sains approved by the Apostles Rules. 3. Combination in a new Brotherhood. 4. The Reason of such Separation, and Combination, accounting the Christians who are conformable, &c. to be profane and unmeet for them to joyn with, in Christian Profession. The *Nonconformists* both of Denominations, Presbyterian and Congregational, do declare, 1. That they believe, and hold Communion of Saints. 2. That the Apostle's Rules are the Rules of that Communion. 3. That conforming Ministers and Christians are true Churches, a true and excellent part of the Catholick Church. 4. That they separate not from any Christians, because they are, or that are *Christians* conformable to the Doctrine, &c. There is not a conformable Christian in *England*, or in the whole World, but they that are sincere Christians among them, do and must hold Communion with them

in the Christian Profession. The Reason of their Combinations, is because of some Injunctions required of them alien from the Apostles Rules; as we are Christians, and keep to the Apostles Rules, they do not judg us to be unmeet for Christian Profession with them. As this is clear from the declared Doctrines of the *Nonconformists*, so it is clear in the Practice of many of them, as more than my self can testify, who have had of them, communicate in Prayer, Preaching and Sacraments with us. There may be some, who ignorantly, weakly and passionately, upon Prejudice and Unacquaintance, may be too far estranged from us, but as many of these as are Christians, dare not withdraw from Christian-Communion with us; or judg us unmeet for Christian Profession with them; these are to be pittied and rectified; but if they believe with the Heart, and confess with the Mouth Jesus Christ; the Schism is verbal and oral, but not fundamental, and in the Heart. A Man may be shy of another Man's Company, through Unacquaintance and Suspicion, but if he will not keep the same Pace, or the same Track in the way to Heaven, I'll own him for a Fellow-Traveller, if I see him go on in the beaten Path of Christianity, tho not hand in hand with me. If he suspect me for a Robber, I'll assure him of my Honesty if I can, that we have the Comfort of good Company. There are not so many that declare themselves bound for Heaven, that I must cut off them that do; because we have some Jars and Disputations upon our Journey—. Let us learn Moderation from the highest Fathers, of the Church in their days, and learn this *Canonical Notion* of a Schismatick. A Schismatick from the Church, is, *He that separates from the Communion of Saints, according to the Apostles Rules, as from Christians unmeet for Christian Profession, because they conform; i. e. as from no Christians, but prophane, because they conform to the Doctrine, Government, and Ceremonies of the Church of England.*

Agreeable with this, is that Description of Schism given us by that clear and very learned Dr. *Barnaby Potter*, (*Answer to Charity mistaken*, Sect. 3. p. 76.) 'Whosoever professes himself to forsake the Communion of any one Member of the Body of Christ, must confess himself consequently to forsake the whole. And therefore her Communion we forsake not no more than the Body of Christ, whereof we acknowledge the Church of *Rome* a Member, tho corrupted. And this clears us from the Imputation of Schism, whose Property it is, (witness the *Donatists* and *Luciferians*.) to cut off from the Body of Christ, and the hope of Salvation, the Church from which it separates.

I must confess, when the Jesuit-Knot frames an Argument from this Description of Schism; the Rational Mr. *Chillingworth*, denies the Syllogism; saying, it is all one as to prove, that because a Man hath a Fever, therefore

therefore he hath the Plague; and makes this to be but one Property of a Schism. But be it so, if this be a Vindication of the Protestants from being Schismatics, because of our Separation from *Rome*; it will as clearly vindicate our Protestant *Nonconformists* from the charge of Schism, from the Established Church, for they do not cut off from the Body of Christ and hope of Salvation, the Church of *England*. Indeed, the Separation with which they are charged, is not from it, as from a Church, but as Separation in a Church, fundamentally and essentially the same, but differing in Accidents and Modes, which must needs be the lowest kind of Difference, and not comparable to that in *Corinth*; which our Famous Dr. *Rainolds* (*De Lib. Apocryphis Praelect.* 1.) calls only *Schisma nascens*; for the *Conformists* and *Nonconformists* are all one in Christ; none of the *Nonconformists* have been ever heard to divide, and cry, *I am of Paul, and I am of Apollo, &c.* Our imposed Accidents are the dividing things among us. And certainly, if the *Nonconformists* do sin grievously, in refusing Communion with us in them, agreeing in all the Parts of Christian Catholick Communion with us; It will be a remarkable Act of Charity and Goodness in our Governours to deliver them from so great a Sin, by reducing the fore-quoted Doctrine of our Church, in the Homily of Fasting, into Practice; for those be the things, at which they stumble, it will be a Charity to take them out of the way: Or if they will not remove them, then I'll conclude, it is hard to call them Schismatics, who are all one with us, as far as we are all one with all Reformed and Christian Churches, remembering the Words of the Learned Dr. *Stillington*, in his Defence of Arch-bishop *Laud*; *Before the imposing Humor came into particular Churches, Schism was defined by the Fathers and others, to be a voluntary Departure out of the Church; yet that cannot in Reason be understood of any particular, but the true Catholick Church.*

Pag. 359.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 1. line 10. dele *to me*. P. 4. l. 21. after *&c.* add *which*. P. 5. l. 21. after *Bishops*, add *an* dele *And* P. 8. l. 12. dele *that* P. 9. l. 16. d l *only*. l. 37. r. *Church-Order*. Ib. r. for. P. 10. l. 1. of *the National*. &c. P. 11. l. 18. after *Country*, add *they are unfit* P. 15. l. 4. r. 166. P. 24. l. 40. for *they*, r. *we*. P. 26. l. 4. r. *disposited*. l. 29. r. *Anti-reforming*. P. 31. Marg. r. *are*, for *is*. P. 39. l. 40. r. *is*. P. 40. l. 15. r. *Preachers*. P. 57. l. 10. after *Order*, add 2.

The Preface, and some other Sheets the Author did not revise; therefore the Printer desires the Reader to correct, or pardon what *Errata* he finds therein.

THE
Conformist's fourth Plea
FOR THE
Nonconformists.

WHEREIN
Several Considerations are offered for
Christian Forbearance.

WITH
Some Relations of some of their SUFFERINGS,
humbly submitted to Authority, in order to move
Compassion.

Together with
Some Account of the Infamous Lives and Lamentable Deaths
of some INFORMERS, &c.

By a Charitable and Compassionate CONFORMIST,
Author of the former PLEAS.

Edward Parson.

K. Charles I. 'ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΑ. Med. 27.

The King's Prerogative is best shewed and exercised in remitting, rather than exacting the Rigor of the Laws, there being nothing worse than Legal Tyranny.

His Majesty's Gracious Speech, Feb. 5. 1672.

— *I put forth my Declaration for Indulgence to Dissenters, and I have hitherto found the good Effect of it.* —

L O N D O N,

Printed for L. Curtis at the Sign of Sir Edmund-Bury
Godfrey, near Fleet-Bridg. MDC LXXX III.

Nonconformists.

General Considerations and General Principles
Christianity and the Church

THE JOURNAL OF THE
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The Epistle to the Reader.

IT is as much in the Reader's power to read, or to forbear with Contempt, as to buy or not to buy: He knows that I, and the Book-seller can't impose upon him: if he overlook, or despise me, he saves both his Money and his Time, and he may spare his Censures of Affeclation or any other Fault, except he certainly know it, with as much Kindness to himself, as Justice to me. I owe such Men no account of my self, or of the Multiplication of these Pleas; but they that will be pleased to read them, will accept the Reason of the Number, as well as the Thing. When I had written the first, I thought I had done with the Argument, except called upon to vindicate, or confirm, to explain, or to correct what requires Correction. But when I had said all I thought fit to say, it was without any cause at all given by me, reported that I had written a Second Plea, and the Second Plea was enquired after before it was conceived in my Mind. Upon notice of this, I considered if this might be an Invitation or Call to view, and to give my sense of their Sufferings with respect to publick Benefit, by a Cessation of their many Troubles, and Liberty to preach the Gospel. I was confined to Brevity in that which yet was too large for many. In it I did state the Case as truly and distinctly as possibly I could, and laboured to inform the Reader, both historically and rationally: I looked upon the historiceal Part as obscure, because short; and upon the rational as too weak, wanting the Authority of Testimony, and consent of the Eminent Writers of our Church. And because I saw the Incredulity of the Right Reverend Bishop of Cork, who drew my Estimation and Affection to him for his peaceable Design, as if the Sufferings of the Nonconformists were artificially aggravated to an evil end, I thought three things necessary to be done: 1. To run up to the Spring of our Divisions in the Savoy-Conference, and gave some Historical Account of Church-Affairs before, and about that time, which I perceived many did not know. 2. To shew and compare the Aspects of some of our most Renowned Writers of the Church of England, and our Dissenting Protestants towards the same things, of very great moment and tendency to Peace. 3. To represent some of the many Sufferings of Divines of known Loyalty, meerly for Nonconformity, to this end, that their Sufferings might affect Authority, and incline Men's Minds to Mercy and Forbearance. For while their Sufferings are slighted, and their Cause despised, and odiously

The Epistle to the Reader.

exposed as it commonly is, there is no hope of Reconciliation, nor Abatement of their Sufferings, nor of any Concessions to make their Admission easy and comfortable. And all this was done together, and referred to the ingenious and honest Bookseller, who being the proper Judge of his own Affairs, concluded it best to divide the whole into two Parts; and so that which was a Supplement to the Second Plea, is called the Third, and that which was a part of the Third, is called the Fourth Plea. This account I thought good to give of the Number, to them who are not displeased with the Argument, but with the Number. But it will be more difficult to satisfy them who are displeased with the Argument it self. And of this I have here and there dropt a Reason, besides a kind of Apology, in the Second, which I think took up too much room; and therefore I shall not run out here. My Design is thoroughly known to Him, whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, to whom I must give my last Account, and receive my final Judgment, after that Men have talkt and done their Pleasure: I do humbly beg his Forgiveness for all Failings; and of Men, when any shall convince me of any Injury which I have ignorantly and unwillingly done, if any be done. I do verily believe the Argument is a needful Argument: and had the Management of it been answerable to it's Importance, and by a better hand, I should have more rejoiced to read it, than now I can; but yet as it is, I do not repent that I have given my Testimony to the Servants of Christ, nor the Faith and Holiness professed and propagated by them, although some will make it as dear to me as they can. But they and I are in the hands of God, and for their sakes I wish they would not be too bold and free of their Menaces.

*Id. Plea 2.
p. 24.* There is a noted Person, who affects the Title of Observator (I am sure, either he is wilfully blind on one side, or he is abused by his Spectacles and Informers) to whom I am indebted. I cannot pass by his Observator upon the Third Plea, Numb. 172. Tory speaks of the Plea; No, no, 'tis not ripe for Violence yet, but he advances very fairly, by way of Preparatory to it, if he can but perswade the Multitude that the five-Mile Act was fram'd and pass'd by Papists. Here's the King now, and the Majority of both Houses, exposed to the Rabble. as a Popish Faction.

Reader, here's Observator now. These Words [fram'd and pass'd by Papists] are not mine, but his.

There is a Dose of his Ingenuity and Goodness wrapt up in the Insinuation, as if I said or meant, as he is bold to report. If I quote my Authors for what I said, or produce my Testimonies, he will not abide me more than them, because Parliament-Men. One worthy Member of the House in the Debate about uniting Protestant Dissenters, appealed to many Members then in the House, who were in that Parliament, as remembring that Act was promoted by Sir Thomas Clifford, Sir Solomon Swale, and Sir Roger Strickland, who all appeared to be Papists.

And

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And I could name him some who remember the three Corners of the House of Commons in which these three Popish Agents placed or posted themselves to see that the Votes of their Friends might not fail their Expectations, if not Engagements. Three such leading Men as these were in the House, when thinner than usual because of the Plague, and being then disguised, and afterwards open Papists, was enough to denominate a Popish Faction, and to carry what they contrived, especially pretending a Service to the Church, and by that pretence drawing the unwary Protestant to vote the same way. The Añ, and the Oath in the Añ was opposed by the eminent Loyal Earl of Southampton Lord Treasurer, and others of the Nobility, and by the eminent Dr. Earl Bishop of Salisbury; and when they of the other Party endeavoured to lay the same Oath upon the whole Kingdom, it was not only opposed by the Loyal; but carried in the Negative by three Votes, which were the now Earl of Lindsey, and the Earl of Danby, and Mr. Perigrine Bartue, who was that day introduced into the House by the other two. And this is sufficient to prove the other part of my Sentence, that it was opposed by the Loyal. It is the first time that I ever read or heard that the King fram'd or passed the Añ: (the Añs are passed before they are presented to him) or, which I abhor to think, to be in a Popish Faction, I leave the Scandal where I found it in Observator, with more of the same Dy and Tincture. Others there are that may be satisfied with the same Answers, who take it ill that it is remembred the five-Mile Añ was procured or promoted by Popish Counsels and Endeavours. Had not great and observing Men, who served in Parliaments declared it, I should not have laid any part of my Argument upon it, neither do I think a Quid pro Quo, to be an excuse for me, if I had said it, without sufficient Testimony, that they who arraign and damn the Pleas, have given out that the Declaration of Indulgence, was from the same Counsels, and in favour of the Papists. The Kingdom was alarmed with the fears of Popery; and many Preachers were Lecturers upon the Controversies against Popery, as if it had been at the Church doors, and all must be armed against it: His Majesty took notice of it in his Gracious Speech of February 5. 1672. 'I put forth my Declaration for Indulgence to Dissenters, and I have hitherto found the good Effect of it — There is one part in it which hath been subject to Misconstruction, which is that concerning the Papists, as if more Liberty were granted them, than to the other Recusants, when it is plain there is less, &c. 'I do not intend it shall any ways prejudice the Church, but I will support its Right, and it in its full Power. Having said this, I shall take it very ill to receive Contradiction in what I have done; and I will deal plainly with you, I am resolved to stick to my Declaration.

The Lord Chancellour also spake the same thing. 'His Majesty hath so fully vindicated his Declaration from that Calumny concerning the Papists, that no reasonable Scruple can be made by any good Man: He hath sufficiently justified

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it by the time it was published in, and the Effects he hath had from it; and might have done it more, from the agreeableness of it to his own natural Disposition, which no good English Man can wish otherwise than it is: He loves not Blood, or rigorous Severities; but where mild or gentle ways may be used by a wise Prince, he is certain to choose them — and concludes that Head thus: But his Majesty is not convinced that violent ways are the Interest of Religion, or the Church. p. 12, 13.

And the same Lord Chancellour, then a great Minister of State, gives his Reasons to his Friend contrary to the Lord Clifford's, why he should think that Indulgence was a favour to the Protestant Dissenters, and for the advantage of the Protestant Religion, which are printed in a Letter from a Person of Quality, p. 5. However, it is clear, many of our Protestant Brethren declared their contrariety to Popery in their Learned Morning Exercises against Popery and otherwise, and do well know that one World cannot hold the Papists and them both, if Popery have Power; And our Mittimus will be quickly drawn, after that St. Peter's Successor can come in Goaler, a Place he would purchase at any rate.

But O! how much more happy were it for us to be reconciled, and made one by Christ, by his Spirit, by his Gospel, than be made Friends by him that opposeth himself, and was known in England by the Name of Antichrist, which he can never forget, nor digest? Discerning and good Men are under Apprehensions of Sufferings coming upon us, and write their Preparations; one, a worthy Minister of our Church, for Martyrdom, others for Sufferings; and the excellent Mr. Polhill draws the Face and Aspect of the Times with his curious Pen. Charity is cold, Differences are hot, Moderation vanishes, Enmity every where appears, Popery lifts up it self in the World; Protestants help on the Design by destroying each other. Sin is gone up with a great Cry to Heaven; black Clouds of Wrath hang over our heads for it; the decays of holy Love threaten a remove of our Candlesticks; Lukewarmness in Religion shews, that we are fit to be spewed out of God's Mouth: Every one that hath eyes in his head may see the Tendency of such things as these — Epistle to the Reader before his Armatura Dei.

Our Peace is protracted by the Preservation of One Life, upon which it hangs, which is more worth than ten thousand of us (2 Sam. 18. 3.) often wonderfully preserved from open and latent dangers. But in how many Cities, Corporations and Counties is a Civil War begun! What Contrivances are studied to divide us, and provocations to strike? O who can number or express the division of Hearts amongst us! what Contentions in Parishes! what Inquisitions after Dissenters! They are once again become the Publick Grievance, and great Dangerous Party to be suppressed. The Tide that rose against Popery a few years ago, is turned upon them now: as some have observed it several times before to have done,

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done. Yea, they are not only driven out of their Meetings, but cannot in some Places, worship God in their own private Families without Spies, yea, more, without Molestation; Suspected evil Designs can not be more narrowly watched, than they are, who fear and worship the God of Heaven. Hence Impiety takes great Boldness and Confidence, and Piety is shut up, and must neither be heard nor seen. I am credibly informed, it is thus for a Time (but how long?) in some Places, since wicked Men see they may take that Course, which scarce any but they will undertake. And this Way of Impiety to discountenance, terrify, and confine or banish true real Piety, is that which I speak against, and direct my Discourse to.

I make not my self wiser than my Rulers, nor do oppose my self against lawful Power, lawfully used by the meanest Officer; but being in some measure affected with the great Piety of many of my Brethren, and their great Sufferings in many kinds, and the Proceedings of most Men against them. Nonconformity is but the Pretence; but it is the Gain of something which shall never profit them, nor be blessed unto them, that is aimed at. Who can say, he was ever the better or the richer for the many great Losses of the Sufferers? It were happy for the Informers, if no worse should befall them in this World, (not to speak of the World to come) than happened to two of them, who went to complain, or demand (or both) their Moyety of a Justice of Peace, who commanded them both to be set in the Stocks. Some Instances of the temporal State of these kind of Men are given in the few following Narratives.

Observe the Methods and Manner of the Execution, and the vast Dissimilitude between their observing the Sabbath-Day, and the hunted Dissenters. I do heartily wish all Things were done decently and in order in the Publick Assemblies, and that thither might be the Way of all God's People with one consent: But if that cannot be, without Controversy, to worship God in Christ by one Spirit, to preach one Faith, to join in Praises, to celebrate Sacraments, are more like the Sanctification of the Name and Sabbaths of the Lord our God, than riding and running up and down with vain Words, Boastings, Threatnings and Oaths, in a Morning, to find out a Preacher, and the Afternoon in Excess and Riot.

I remember that Musculus said, The Papists were unfit Men to correct the Anabaptists; Correctionis non est opus, nisi verorum Christianorum. As he saith, Papists may burn them, but cannot correct them, except Burning be Correction: So these Men may inform, distrain, buy and sell the distrained Goods, and hale Nonconformists to Prison; but is this to convince and reduce them? And tho others may have better Aims and Intentions than these Inferiours have, yet is there not a more excellent Way? especially in such a Time as this, and in such a Matter, wherein so much of the Glory of our Lord

Jesus

Jesus is concerned. Let us fear, that to prosecute such Men and Differences as intolerable, do not bring upon us that which is really so.

I have used some Means to inform my self, and cannot find that there is one Sign of God's Approbation of such a Course as this is. I have given a small Handfull of Instances in the following Collection, from which much may be observed; and it is but a very little, not so much as a Gleaning would be, if all were written which might be. I have seen it under the Hand of a Reverend Divine, that it was the Conjecture of several Ministers, that if the History of the Sufferings of the Nonconformists were written, but in the West of England, it would make a great Folio. O how much more necessary a Duty lies upon Men, of turning to the Lord from all their wicked Ways, of working out their own Salvation, and furthering the Salvation of one another, of following after Love, Righteousness, and Peace, and Preparation for the black Day of Death, and the great Day of Judgment! and to be more strict against open Sins, than controverted and tolerable Distinctions! But if they who are born after the Flesh, will shew their Natures, and grow wanton in Peace and Plenty, and find none to insult upon in their wanton Raptures, but those that desire to know and worship God in Fear; Let all those who are born from above, and are Partakers of the Divine Nature, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, put on Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another: And if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: And above all these things, put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness.

And if other Places will not afford Rest and Quietness for peaceable and honest good Men, that differ in a few Things; let not London forget their Labours, who ventured their Lives (with other good Men) to save, and to make Intercessions for them, in the dreadful Plague; nor them who lay in the Dust, pouring out Prayers for them, when Ruines lay instead of stately Piles, who have been eminently serviceable to reclaim dissolute Youth, and promote Piety and Goodness. And why may not good Men, of different Notions and Persuasions in Modes and Forms, live together in Peace and Love, converse with mutual Confidence and Dearness, as well as trade, and maintain Commerce with Persons and Nations of a contrary Religion?

But I must conclude. The Lord prosper what I have in much Sincerity endeavoured for the Glory of God, and his Truth, the Honour of the King, and the Peace and Tranquillity of the Kingdom. Amen.



T H E

Conformist's fourth Plea

F O R T H E

Nonconformists.



UNION is that which all wise, good and gracious Souls must needs desire, and endeavour to attain, as they endeavour the attainment of Happiness, which consisteth in it. Our Divisions are extreme painful and uncomfortable; a great Dishonour and Impediment to Religion, and Communion of Saints. Every Motion and Proposal for it deserves Attention and Thanks, tho

it cannot be embraced or assented to. And whatsoever tends to make, continue, and widen our Divisions, should conscientiously be avoided. Rigorous exacting of abateable Articles and Terms, Prejudices, Suspensions, straining of Consequences, aggravating Offences, odious Representations of Persons, Strangeness; refusing to do Offices of Kindness, Justice, and Mercy; dissingenuous Censures, provoking Speeches, and Bitterness, are Wedges of Division: besides other wounding and cutting warlike Instruments, and Proceedings of Ecclesiastical Hostility. As it was from Hardness of Heart, that the Jews put away their Wives for every cause; so it proceeds not from Tenderness of Heart, that our Brethren are put away, as incurable Schismatics, for every Dissent and Disagreement. Peace, Love, and Forbearance have a greater Place assigned them in Religion, than the Things in Controversy, which cause our Division. And whether it be meetest for the greater Things to suffer by the lesser, or the lesser to give place to the greater, let common Reason judge, and common

B

Experience

Experience come in as Evidence ; especially in a time when we see Religion wounded in Head and Heart, and it can never recover Health, Strength, and Beauty, as long as these Wounds lie open. Unite we must, or continue in this disjointed broken Condition, and grow worse and worse by the application of Force and Warrants. The evil Consequences of this Course are many and great. 1. The Law of Love and Dearness is violated. 2. The Dissenters, in their Judgment, will never want a sufficient Cause, to justify both their Dissent, and their Sufferings ; and the better the Cause of their Sufferings appears to be, the more to blame will they be ever thought, by whom they suffer. 3. The ambitious and factious Politician will serve and advance his private Designs by siding with either of the discontented Parties ; and the Vices of the Politician shall be laid on the Head of Sacred Religion. 4. Others will sacrifice the Peaceable and Innocent, with their Freedom and Estates, to their own Avarice, and devouring Lusts, under a pretence of executing Laws, and serving the Publick Good and Tranquillity. In few words, Who can reckon the many Impieties of several sorts, that break in upon the Kingdom of Christ at this great Breach ? The greatest and Sum of all is, a Breach in the Communion of Saints, in the Offices of Love. The mischievous Effects of Divisions, are so many Arguments for Union.

And that which doth prejudice sober Minds against the present Course of *Informers*, and armed Men, is, That it tends to the extinction of Love, and to enlarge the Division. And for Union sake, I desire the following Considerations may have the force of Arguments.

But before I come to propose them, I desire it may be noted,

1. It is, and must be acknowledged, that the King is Supreme Governor over all Persons and Causes Ecclesiastical, and it belongs to his Office, to protect and promote the true Christian Religion, and preserve it from what is contrary and destructive to it.

2. As the Offices and Duties of the Supreme Power, seated in the Kings of *England*, and Bishops and Pastors, have been always distinguished by our most approved Writers ; as may be seen in Bishop *Bilson*, of *Subjection* ; *Bridges*, of the *Supremacy* ; *Andrews*, *Tortura Torti*, &c. Dr. *Nowel* against *Dorman*, (which Dr. *Reynolds* brought to *Hart*, in the beginning of their Conference, who said, That if we gave to Princes no more than Dr. *Nowel* did, he did agree with it) ; and King *James* himself.

3. When the Magistrate exerciseth his Power by executing of Laws, it is the Duty of the Pastors of the Church to use the Key of Doctrine ; that spiritual Means may be applied to the Souls of Men, according to the prescription of our Saviour.

4. Distin-

4. Distinguish between Laws in their Intention, and the Application of them, which hath often fallen into such hands, as turn them away from their Intention, and do not observe them as a Rule to themselves, in their Proceedings.

5. No Apology is made, or to be made for any seditious Practice or Doctrines, for violation of Peace, Subjection, and Righteousness, &c.

De vobis quidem dixisse Apostolum legimus, quod non sine causa gladium geratis, & ministri Dei sitis, vindices in eos qui male agunt: sed alia est causa Provinciæ, alia est causa Ecclesiæ; illius terribiliter gerenda est, administratio hujus clementer: Commendanda est mansuetudo. St. Aug. Epist. 150 ad Apringium.

We may distinguish between *peccata spiritualia & secularia*, between spiritual Sins, and secular. His duplicibus peccatis puniendus, &c. In punishing these two Sins, God hath ordained a twofold Sword or Punishment: a spiritual Sword for spiritual Sins, which is the Word of God; and for secular and outward Sins, a secular Sword, namely *Cæsar's*. *Joan. Brentius, de Jure Magistratus in Anabaptistas.*

Again, we may distinguish between both kinds of Sins, and Evangelical Duties. The Dissenters are not prosecuted for Infidelity, Heresy, &c. or for seditious Doctrines, or for secular Crimes and Offences; but for meeting in such Numbers for Religious Exercises and Ordinances; and for this, only because in a manner different from the Church of *England*, that is, without the Liturgy, as hath been said, and should be kept in mind. And the Prosecution begins by *Informers*, (usually false and wicked Persons, that make a Trade of it) and ends in Fines, Imprisonments, and corporal Sufferings. The manner of doing their Work or Office, is with prophane-ness, Impiety, with what Wrath and Terror they can possibly cast a peaceable unarmed People into. The Informers rush in with Bellowing and Roaring, with Oaths and Impiousness: Sometimes the Souldier comes in with his Pistol cock'd, and threatens he'll pistol any one that stirs, he'll crack the Preacher's Crown, or pistol him.

These Things inserted, to several Uses, and for several Reasons which might be given, I do present you with the Considerations.

I. Can an Evangelical Union of Christians and Churches be ever hoped for by Anti-Evangelical Means and Instruments? Aggravate their Religious Exercises in a manner different from the Liturgy, as proceeding from Minds tainted with no less than Heresy, and to be a direct and formal Schism, and tending to corrupt and not to edify the Souls of Men: What Means and Instruments more proper and effectual to attain a blessed

Unity, and to preserve a Christian Church, than what are appointed by our Lord and Saviour? Certainly he took care to preserve the Purity of Faith, Doctrine, Worship, and Unity of the Faithful; or else he did but according to what he blames, in a Man that begins to build what he cannot finish, sets up a Kingdom in Satan's Kingdom, a Church in the Dominions of the World, which would run into Confusion and Ruine from within it self, except he took a course to preserve it. To call and convert, and not to keep, but to lose, had not been to act answerably to the glorious Name of a Saviour. Since his Manifestation in the exercise of his Mediatorial Office, he fulfilled all Offices in his own Person, as Prophet, Priest, and King: After his Ascension, he taught and directed his Church by his Spirit, in his Apostles and Ministers; and since their Decease, by his Holy Spirit, and revealed Will and Laws. The Christian Church had all Power within it self, before the Conversion of Emperors, and Civil Potentates; and since they became Nursing-Fathers and Nursing-Mothers, the Church hath lost nothing of her spiritual Power by it; for the Magistrate's Power is not privative, but accumulative. If Penalties, Mulcts, Fines, Imprisonments, and forcible Coertion, had been so necessary, it had been necessary to convert and set up Christian Emperors and Kings, armed with a Civil Power, as soon as he had given Success to his Ministers, in calling a Church out of the World: Yet this is not to be wrestled to this very Construction, as if the Church could do as well without a Christian Magistrate, as with him. It only pretends to shew us, that our Lord Jesus hath left us Means and Directions, sufficient for the preservation of his Church in Purity and Unity; and that those Prescriptions are most likely to produce his Ends.

Three things are pernicious to the Christian Church: (1.) Corruption of Doctrine and Heresy. (2.) Disunion and Schisms. (3.) Scandal in our Lives and Manners. Our Saviour hath taken care to keep his Church from, or to reform and purge it of all manner of pernicious Acts and Works of Satan and the Flesh: And it lay upon him so to do, more than upon the most Christian Magistrate or Pastor, because he redeem'd his Flock with his own Blood, and took upon him to be the Head of it, and all the Honour he receives from the World, is from his Church in it; and therefore it concerns him so to govern his Church, that he may be honoured in it and by it. To this end the Lord promised to send his Spirit, who is the Spirit of Revelation and Truth, who leads Christ's Disciples into all necessary and saving Truth, and the Spirit of Union with Christ our Head, and with one another, as Fellow-Members. We are instructed in the same Doctrine, governed by the same Laws of Worship and Conversation, and entitled to the same Promises, and Hope of Eternal Life; we are employed in the same Service, engaged in the same Interest, and are made

all of one Heart, in the main, in the same Aim and Scope. *The Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, and Meekness.* Gal. 5. 22, 23. *The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghost.* Rom. 14. 17. The Wisdom of all who are of this Kingdom, is *Wisdom from above, which is pure peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits.* Jam. 3. 17. To call for Fire from Heaven, was from another Spirit. *Christianorum spiritus clemens est, comburit tantum igne charitatis.* Urbanus Regius, *soc. Theolog. Cap. de Hæreticis.* He hath shewed a more excellent way to Pastors and People, and their Civil Governors. Besides the personal Qualifications of a Bishop, which accomplish him for his Work, the Scripture is full of Directions for his Behaviour in the House of God, at all Times, and when those Evils do compass and invade it, which do endanger it: *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, instructing them that oppose themselves.* 2 Tim. 2. 24. When perilous Times come, he must continue in the Things which he hath learned, and been assured of. chap. 3. v. 14. When Men arise to subvert the Hearers, and whose Words will eat as with a Canker or Gangreen; then, *Charge them before the Lord, that they strive not about Words to no Profit. Study to shew thy self approved of God, a Workman. Fly youthful Lusts; follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Name of the Lord out of a pure Heart.* 2 Tim. 2. 14, 15, 22, 23, 24. When the Time comes, that People will not endure sound Doctrine, &c. but turn away from the Truth, then, *Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* 2 Tim. 4. 2, 3. What shall they do, if grievous Wolves enter in among the Flock? and Men arise, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them; then, *Take heed to your selves, and to the Flock, &c.* Acts 20. 29, 30. What, when unruly and vain Persons and Deceivers, who subvert whole Houses, teaching Things which they ought not, for filthy Lucre sake? In this Case he is directed, besides the Graces of his Conversation, he must hold fast the faithful Word, that he may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and confute the Gainsayers: *Rebuke them sharply.* Tit. 1. 9, 13. What must be done, if Ordinances be profaned or corrupted? They must be restored to their first Institution and Purity. 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, &c. If Gifts be exercised unprofitably? *Let all Things be done to edifying.* 1 Cor. 14. 26. If Ordinances and Administrations be disorderly, and by unfit Persons? *For it is a shame for Women to speak in the Church,* v. 35. *Let all Things be done decently, and in Order,* v. 40. What if Christians run into Schisms? Reprove and reduce them, as the Apostle doth, 1 Cor. chap. 1, & 3. And if Brethren fall into scandalous Sins, which leaven the Lump, the Apostle's Order to the Corinthians was,

was, to put them away, *not to accompany with them, no, not to eat.* And the Covetous, Idolater, Reviler, Drunkard, Extortioner, are ranked with the Fornicator, 1 Cor. 5. 11. Excommunication is the greatest and last Censure and Judgment of the Church; and when it is past, the excommunicate Person must be look'd after. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8.

Manfuetioribus (Episcopis) inter quos fuit diu Augustinus, non placuit imploratio profane potestatis ad negotium Ecclesiasticum, existimantibus non decere Episcopis aliis armis uti quam verbo Dei & precibus, & si malum foret insanabile, Anathemate, h. e. separatione à Communione: Hoc tum erat extremum Ecclesie supplicium. Et sicut apud Jurisconsultos, civilis mors dicitur exilium; ita apud Apostolos, & horum Successores, pœna capitis erat ab Ecclesie consortio submovisse, &c. Erasmus in Respons. de Inquisitione.

There are weak Persons in the Church, and the Apostle gives us his own Example for our Behaviour, 1 Cor. 9. 22. *To the Weak I became as weak, that I might gain the Weak.* In a word, the Weapons of our Warfare are assimilated or fitted to the Warfare; they are spiritual. 2 Cor. 10. 45. The holy Apostle saw, or foresaw, the worst of Men and Times, and hath by the Spirit of God directed what's fit and best to be done by the Pastors of the Churches. And the Flock are not wholly left to the Guidance of their Pastors, but they are taught how to act and carry themselves. They must know all Things, 1 Theff. 5. 21. *Try the Spirits,* 1 Joh. 4. 1. *Contend for the Faith,* Jude 3. *Stand fast,* 1 Cor. 16. 13. *Beware of false Prophets,* Mat. 7. 15. *Mark and avoid them that cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine.* Rom. 16. 17. Phil. 3. 2. &c. And against Corruptions of Manners, they are advised, Col. 3. 9. 1 Cor. 5. to v. 8. 1 Cor. 11. 20, &c. *Ephef. 5. 4.*

Lastly; Touching the Magistrate's Power, there is one Law for him: What the Heathen Magistrates were not, but should be, that the Christian Magistrate must be, Rom. 13. 3. 4. *the Minister of God for Good, a Terror, not to the Good, but to the Evil.*

Estote contenti gladio quem vobis tradidit Deus; punite latrones, punite proditores, falsos testes, & ejus generis ceteros. Quot ad Religionem attinet, defendite pios adversus aliorum injurias. Georg. Klembergius.

Upon the whole, we see what care the Lord hath taken of his Church, and what Means are to be used for the Preservation of Purity in Doctrine and Life, and of Unity among Christians. And 'tis not to be doubted but if all in their places, did walk according to the Commands of our Saviour, our Divisions would be near to a Cure, or more tolerable than now they are; and what Spirit or Power so likely to heal and prevent our feared Destruction, as a Catholick Christian Spirit, which is holy, gracious, fervent, charitable, laborious, patient, reconciling, and wise. After that St. Augustine changed

ged his Judgment, from sparing, to be for fining and coercing the *Donatists* and *Circumcellions*, he did not leave the Work in the Hands of the Presidents and their Officers, but did use all spiritual Means to rectify and recover them : *Si enim terrentur & non docerentur, improba quasi Dominatio videretur.* Aug. Vincentio, Ep. 48. and he was so far from exasperating and exciting the Magistrates, that he often wrote by way of Intercession. A greedy wicked Informer, and his Disciples, should never discharge us from all Evangelical Ways of healing our Breaches. And tho they are Instruments to call for Execution of a Temporal Law, we must not think our selves excused, till we have done all that is in us to procure Unity and Peace. And let it be but thought upon ;

1. If Discipline were executed, Whether those impious Agents are not the meetest Objects of it ?

2. Make the Case of the Dissenting Protestants as bad as can be, suppose them Hereticks and Schismatics ; yet let us search the Scripture, and see if Adulterers and Fornicators, and other wicked Doers, are not under a worse Note than they. We are to avoid Hereticks, and the Concision, that make Divisions, contrary to the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles, of necessary and ceremonial, and indifferent things. We are to labour to set Dividers in joint ; but where we do find the weak, and doubting Brother, yea more, they who cried, *I am of Paul, and I of Cephas*, to be as a Heathen or Publican, or to be put away, or with such an one, no not to eat ? The Offences of weak Christians, or such as are taken at different Forms, or indifferent Things, are none of those Offences that bring Wo to the World.

3. Not some Godliness in one Form, but all Godliness, in all Forms within general Rules and Honestly, deserve Protection and Praise.

4. They impute greatest Fault to the Laws, that give them this Construction, That the Dissenters suffer for violating a Temporal Law, which makes any Exercise of Religion to such a number above four to be *sedition* : which is as much as to say, the Law makes that to be a Sin, a Sin of Sedition, which is no Sin, but in it self good and religious, and of great use and benefit.

5. Certainly it is a less Error, to err in a Form of Worship, than in the Substance of true Faith and Worship. But suppose our Brethren were Apostates from the Faith, it were greater Mercy to force them to the Faith than to a Form of Worship : but Compulsion with Penalties is nowhere prescribed in the Laws of Christ, not even to the Faith, without which there's no Salvation. *Christo novæ Legis auctori omnino hoc placuisse, ut ad Legem suam recipiendam nemo hujus vitæ penis aut earum metu pertraheretur.* Grotius de jure Belli & Pacis, l. 2. c. xx, §. 48. which he confirms

by several Testimonies of the Ancients, and he interpreteth that in the Gospel, *Compel them to come in*, to signify *instantiam Vocatoris*, the importunity of the Caller.

II. It is unnatural, contrary to natural Light and Law, to punish Men for Religion, and not for Evil-doing. Christians that believe and profess the whole Christian Faith, that worship God according to the general Rules of the Gospel, and follow Righteousness and Peace, are put out of their places, when thrust into the rank of Evil-doers. When the Apostle saith to the Christian under a Heathen Magistrate, *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same*, Rom, 13.3. he speaks of well-doing in the Judgment of Nature, and according to its Light, that well-doing is to be rewarded with Praise, and only evil-doing to be avenged; and that such evil-doing as was contrary to the Law of Nature. *He is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil*; that doth Evil in the sight of God, forbidding the Evil in some of his Laws. Do our Brethren worship a false God, or the true by Images? Do they set up another Gospel? then let them be accused. Do they disseminate Seditions, or act against Peace and Righteousness between Man and Man? let them suffer as other Men do. And if the Prisons cannot hold them, build more for them. But they are not accused of such Offences; they are driven from their Worship in their Meetings, to bring them to other Assemblies; from one Form to another; but yet the Crime is for Religious Exercise, and the worst that can be feared, is some Changes in Religion, or State. I cannot tell how far *Grotius* will be allowed to speak, because he was a great Party in a Faction himself, neither do I use his Name but for this Reason: 'They who punish Teachers and Professors of the Christian Religion, *Haud dubiè faciunt contra ipsam Rationem*—. Neither are their Pretences to be admitted, who say new Changes are to be feared, especially Assemblies—. But new Opinions are not to be feared, which lead only to all things that are honest, and Obedience to Superiours, *Nec suspecti debent cætus probrorum Hominum*, neither ought the Assemblies of honest Men be feared; *Et qui latere non querunt ni-*
De Jur. Bell. lib. 2. si cogantur; and that do not desire to be private
 c. xx. §. 49. or secret, unless they be forced or constrained.
 And in the 50 §. of the same Chapter, he saith,
 'they do very wickedly who punish them, who believe the Law of Christ
 'to be true, but doubt or err in some Points, *que extra Legem sunt*, that
 'are not written in the Law (of Christ) or that are ambiguous, or not
 'expounded by the Ancients in the same Sense. The *Jews* who had the
 'Law for them, did never impose Punishments upon the *Sadduces*, who err'd
 in

in the great Point of the Resurrection. To prove that to punish Religion is preternatural, let it be considered,

1. As Nature dictates, and consents that God is to be worshipped; and Religion is honoured, where God is honoured and owned: so Nature tells us, that Men must worship God according to the light and freedom of their Minds and Wills. Upon this Principle *Athanasius* pleaded the Christian Cause with the Emperors, that they permitted several Nations and People to worship their several Gods, lest Impiety should abound by suppressing the Deity, and for this Reason, because it was necessary, that every Man should worship that God which he had chosen. It was from the loss of Light and Truth, that more Gods than one were worshipped; but it was from right Reason, that every Man should worship according to his own Mind and Choice. The Mercy of God is great in making himself known to us by Revelation, that he might rectify our Minds, and propound himself to us, as infinitely worthy our Choice and Service. Christian Religion contradicts no Dictate of Nature; it is the most that is asked, that our Brethren may be allowed to worship the true God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ with the freedom of their Consciences, differing from

Legat. pro Christianis prope initium.

Tertul. Apol. c. 24.

us only in a few external Modes. *Tertullian* goes upon the same Principle, *tamen humani juris & naturalis Potestatis est unicuique quod putatur colere, neque alii obest, aut prodest alterius Religio* —. There can be no sincere, nor consequently no acceptable Service without a choice and freedom of Mind;

Ad Scapulum. c. 2.

and indeed we should be studious to inquire into the form and manner of Worship, next unto the Knowledge of him who is to be served, that he may be pleased with his Worship. The Soul of the Worshipper finds no Profit by, nor takes Pleasure nor Comfort in what he scruples, nor doth God take Pleasure in that Service which is not done in Faith and Sincerity.

Nemo ab invito colitur. Idem Apol. c. 24.

Inutilis enim Deo est, qui Devotione, ac Fide caret, nihil enim est tam voluntarium, quam Religio; in qua si animus sacrificantis aversus est, jam sublata, jam nulla est. *Lactant. de Iusticia. l. 5. c. 19.*

2. It is contrary to good Nature to render Evil for Good, and not Good for Good. Publicans and Sinners will love and do good to those that do good to them: Religion teaches all its Professors to do Good to all and is attended with the greatest Blessings to Mankind. The design of the Christian Religion is to make Men blessed; and where it works and obtains, it turns the Heart to God, and all manner of Good, and engageth all that receive it to do good to all. It pronounceth a Blessing

only upon the holy and righteous; the Preachers of it teach no other way to Blessedness but by Purity of Heart, Mercy, Righteousness, Peacemaking; it sets before us for our imitation our Heavenly Father, and our Holy Saviour, and holy Men; it enjoins us to mind whatever things are just, true, pure, honest, lovely, and of good Report.

Preachers of the Gospel that endeavour to restore spiritual Light and Life, and to convert lost Souls from the Error of their Ways, deserve better Preferments, than Forfeitures and Penalties, and greater Immunities than from Prisons and Confinements. And Christians should know, that a Willingness to save them, and Fervency in praying for them, and living so as to promote the Welfare of a Nation, is doing the greatest Good to them, and deserves a suitable return.

3. Such is the goodness of Religion, that as soon as Men became acquainted with it, they ceased to persecute it, and did embrace it. He that hath the vivive faculty, doth receive the Light; he that hath a spark of right Reason, and Inclination to good, finds his Soul kindled with a desire to it, and resolution to have and retain it. The Ignorance of the Christian Religion among the *Romans*, was the cause of their Persecution of it, and they did ill to condemn what they knew not. But all who before time hated it, because they knew not what kind of thing it was which they had hated, *simul ut desinunt ignorare, cessant & odisse*, as soon as they cease to be ignorant of it, they cease to hate it. *Tertull. Apol. c. 1.* They who are most, and best acquainted with Religion, its Power and Nature, the Imperfection of Light, Power and Tenderness of Conscience; that read the Works, and are acquainted with the Persons of our Brethren, are most compassionate and moderate, altho there are others which will not know, because they have hated them.

4. It is contrary to Reason and good Nature, to afflict and punish the Religious, because they who were the worst of Men, in whom Corruption of Nature bore greatest Rule, and in whom Honesty and goodness of Nature and Conscience was dethroned, have been its greatest Enemies, even from *Herod and Nero*, to *Severus, Charles the ixth, and Philip of Spain*; and from the High-Priests to *Gardiner and Bonner*: Or, if those Princes were virtuous and merciful in their own Natures, those that did provoke, and abuse their Power, were more degenerate Monsters than Men. Men of good Nature, will be pitiful even to them that err, or do ill through Error. If I knew that a Man did but pray for me, I would believe he loved me; and if I believed he loved me, I would not afflict that Man, but love him, and do him good; much less would I contend and molest him for the want of a Formality. The Scourges of the Ancient Christians, are painted out by *Lactantius* as more inhumane than the most cruel Thieves,
most

most angry Enemies, most fierce *Barbarians*, l. 5. *de Justitia*, c. 19. and that contaminated and wretched Spirits, who know and hate the Truth, do insinuate themselves into the Minds, and stir up ignorant Men to Fury, c. 21.

5. On the contrary; the more humane any Men have been, the more easily inclined to Justice and Clemency to Christians, tho of a different, and an unallowed Religion. Where natural Light and Conscience is in any considerable Authority, there it goes best with the peaceable and inoffensive of a different way; it being contrary to the judgment and sense of humane Nature to deal ill with them, that do no ill. Famous is the Example of *Pliny* and *Trajan* to this purpose: *Pliny* in his Letter to *Trajan* the Emperor for his Direction how to deal with Christians, gave him this just and true account of them, that he found nothing in them, but obstinate refusing to sacrifice, &c. forbidding Man-slaughter, Adultery, Fraud, Treachery, and other Wickednesses. To which *Trajan*, from a good rectified Nature, sent Answer, and gave this Order: *Hoc genus inquirendos non esse*, i. e. You must connive at such: Let not Informers, or Accusers inquire, or search for them. Upon which merciful Decree or Edict, the learned *Vossius* observes, in this *Trajan* the Emperor had better thoughts of Christians, than those Christians have who have thought, that not Mahometans only; but Christians suspected of Heresie, should be brought into the *Inquisition*; *Mitior in Christianos Trajanus, quàm ejusmodi Christiani*. And truly, as Heresy is some degrees beyond Nonconformity, a Worm more pernicious to Christianity, than it; so Christianity was more contrary to the Emperor's Religion, than Nonconformity to ours. From the same Justice and Clemency, and Law of Nature, *Adrian* the Emperor gave order to *Gratianus* the President of *Asia* (to whom it seemed unjust to destroy the Christians for no Crime, and being unheard, to satisfy the Clamors of the People) That they should be punished, if they committed any thing against the Laws: which as the same great Man *G.V.* expounds, is meant, not if they did any thing against the Laws of the twelve Tables, which forbid the bringing in of any new Gods; *Ibid*, p. 89. but, *non esse animadvertendum in Christianos, nisi sint facinorosi*; the Christians might not be punished, except they were great Offenders, or guilty of Sedition. And for a Conclusion of this Head, take the Observation of *Grotius*, that God did not punish all that were convict of Idolatry (what more contrary and dishonourable to God than that?) nor appointed the *Canaanites* to Destruction; till they had added other great Sins and Iniquities to that; *Gen. 15. 16. vid. de Jure Belli*, l. 2. c. xx. §. 47.

6. It is contrary to the sense of the sober and temperate sort of Mankind, yea it's contrary to that little that is left of Conscience, Judgment and Modesty in the more corrupt, and declared Enemies of Religion and Vertue, to inflict Sufferings upon the Religious, for Religion sake, or for Exercises of Piety and Religion. This may be demonstrated by three Observations.

1. That it hath been the business of the most vile and wicked of Men to persecute Religion; it was too cruel and base a Work for any other.

2. The Persecutors of Religion have been constrained by a Fiction of *Calumny*, to oppress the Religious, as impious, and the holy Servants of Christ, as prophane, and seditious, dangerous Persons; or else they could not draw out their Anger and Enmity against them, nor exercise it with any Authority and Approbation: this is true from our Saviour's Sufferings, as an Enemy to *Cesar*, and a Destroyer of the Temple, throughout the days of the Apostles, and all Ages to this very time. Jews, Heathens, and Papists have feigned, and imagined Causes of the unjust Sufferings of the Saints of God. The History of the New-Testament shews this; the Writings of the Fathers in their Apologies shew it, who clear the Christians from the shameless Slanders of Incest, eating Infants, and Atheism, and the foulest of Sins. And the bloody Papists have invented Covers for their Cruelties: First, they brand us for Hereticks, and then they burn us; and to put a Grace upon this foul Work, who are fittest to make and blow the Fire, and mark out the Branches in Christ for it, than the Friars, the Religious Orders, who profess a Perfection of Religion. And as if the Laws of Princes were too soft and gentle, these *Clementia Magistri*, Masters or Teachers of Clemency, (as *Erasmus* calls them) are fiery to a third degree, above the hottest of them. I wish I could stop here, but I cannot, except wilfully heedless, but observe, how some in this Age do temper their Spirits in the very Fire, whet their Tongues, and draw Protestants, holy Men, and peaceable, in a colour deeper than they do Pope or Cardinals.

3. This will appear by the Relentings, Relaxation of the Severities, Excuses, and throwing off the guilt of Persecutions from themselves upon others, and pretending Fears of some great Mutations of State, and some other ways and arts of Persecutors: it is a Work which few or none are willing to own. *Domitian*, a very Limb of *Nero*, *Portio Neronis*, began a Persecution, but as much as was in him of a Man, did repress that beginning, recalling them that were banished. But of all the Princes that came after, even to this very day, that favored any thing of God, or Humanity, shew us any of them that was an Oppressor of the Christians; but on the contrary,

trary, we will produce a Protector. If the Letters of *Marcus Aurelius*, the most grave Emperor, be searched, wherein he testifies, that by the Prayers of the Christian Souldiers, Rain was sent to quench the Thirst of his Army going against the *Germans*: as he openly took off the Punishment from such kind of Men, so he dispers it openly another way, condemning their Accusers in worse Condemnation. Saith *Tertullian*, *Apolog.* c. 5. ' We can ' (saith he to *Scapula*, c. 3.) set before thee the latter ends of some Presidents that in the end of their Life have remembered that they sinned by ' vexing the Christians. *Cinc. Severus* (one of the Cruel Presidents) himself taught the Christians how they might answer that they might be discharged, c. 4. Nearer our own Times, we find that *Charles* the Ninth disowned the treacherous, barbarous Murder of the Admiral, and the bloody Massacre, and throws it upon the Duke of *Guise*, in one of his Letters; and in others wrote, that it was to prevent a Conspiracy of the Admiral and the *Huguenots*. And in the bloody Days of *Queen Mary*, it appears the Persecution was contrary to the sense and temper of the Nation; and who of the chief would avow it? The Queen declared, she would force no Man in those points of Religion: *Gardiner* and other Bishops, and Privy-Counsellours openly in Court purged themselves of it, and laid it on the Queen; so now it could fall no where but on the King —. *Philip* seeing all cast upon him, and understanding it would make him unacceptable to the Nation, he was concerned to clear himself of the Imputation; therefore *Alphonfus a Franciscan*, his Confessor, in a Sermon before him preached largely against the taking away of People's Lives for Religion, and in plain terms inveighed against the Bishops for doing it. And to conclude, even now, if this were the Vote of the Nation of Conforming Protestants, What's the reason that so few directly and professedly engage in it, that are Men of Wisdom, Interest, and Estates? What's the reason that so few of the poor and indigent irreligious do not turn Informers, as long as there is Money to be got by it, as they hope? It is a sign of a general Disallowance and the Dissent of common Reason and Conscience. And if ever a search should be made into them that turn the Wheel upon Dissenters, few or none would stand to it, and say, it is I. It is no other than a spurious Act, which none will own as a voluntary deliberate Act; it hath a Father, but who will father it? *Nolunt enim suum esse, quia malum agnoscunt.*

Printed after the Commentaries of Ch. the ix, by P. Ramus.

Dr. Burnet of the Reformation, B. 2. p. 305.

Confid. III. It is not Loyal, to make a peaceable Government burthenfom to scrupulous, religious, but peaceable, honest, useful Members of Cities, Towns, and Countreys; and to represent Religious Meetings, (suppose them defective in Form) as Cabals of Conspirators: This is to make a State-Schism, and to keep the Government in fear, and upon the watch against our Friends.

Confid. IV. It is Schismatical *effectū*, if not *affectū*; for I demand, Are they Christians? Try their Faith, call them to give a Reason of the Hope that is in them. If they were justly excommunicated, by what divine Rule do they suffer in their Bodies, Goods, and Liberties? Great Care and Tenderness should be used to recover and restore them. But to proceed against Christians, for want of a mutable Form, and indifferent Things, to Poverty and Bonds, and to take no care of them, is it not as much as really to say to Members of the Body, *I have no need of you*? Is this to take care of them? Do they that prosecute, weep with them, and mourn with them? Are they kindly affectioned towards them? Do they love them as Brethren? Have they compassion on them in their Troubles and Bonds? &c. It is not enough for us to say, they are Schismaticks; can that excuse our Schismatical Disaffections, Revilings, Accusations, and Scorns? I am sure the Apostle makes these Notes of a Schismatick, by Inference, as the other of Union to prevent a Schism, *1 Cor. 12.* It is a fine Observation of the memorable Mr. *Jo. Hales*: ‘The Learned of our Times, who, for our Instruction, have written *de Notis Ecclesie* — may seem to have ill forgotten this, which the Heathen Man had so clearly discovered, he meant *Ammianus Marcellinus*, taxing *Georgius*, a factious Bishop of *Alexandria*, for abusing the Weakness of *Constantius* the Emperor, by base Tale-bearing, and privy Informations, notes precisely that he did it, *Oblivus professionis sue, quæ nil nisi justum suadet & lenè*; quite beside his Profession, whose especial Notes were *Gentleness* and *Equity*. The Christians were called *Chrestiani*, from a Word signifying Benignity and Sweetness. What reason is there, why that should not be one of the chiefest Notes of the Church of Christ, which did so especially characterize a Christian Man, except there were a decay of it at this day in the Church? [*Serm. of Dealing with erring Christians*, pag. 26. of the 2d Impression.]

Confid.

Confid. V. It doth reflect a Scandal upon the Church; for now, except it be by writing of some Books, whose Leaves are not like the Leaves of the Tree of Life, for healing of the Nation, what little Pains are taken, to instruct, convince, or persuade them, neither with soft Words, nor hard Arguments? Either are better than neither of them. But now the Officer called *Informer*, is the first Mover and Instrument in the Reformation; an Employment that is, which many that are too bad cannot be hired unto: A sort of Men these are, that are more perfect than the Prosecutors in *Tertullian's* Time: *Tales semper nobis Insecutores injusti, impii, turpes, quos & ipsi damnare consueveris, & à quibus damnatos restituere soliti estis.* Ple English the Character, lest some other make it worse than it is: It is no more but this; They are unjust, ungodly, filthy, such as ye are wont to condemn, (and our Judges have often condemned) and to restore such as are condemned by them. I should not dare to write this, but that I would move our professed Friends to take another Course, more for the Honour of the Church, and our Holy Profession, than this. The Church that now is, can no more turn the Stream, or change the Course of the Law, than other Men can, and are not able to help them, (as the Reverend Bishop of *Cork* speaks, pag. 121.) But is it not fit our Governors should know how it reflects upon them?

1. The World is possess'd with a Conceit, that this Work of undoing Men is pleasing to some that do not only look on, but set Men on; not displeasing to others, tho some say they are sorry for it; as the same foresaid sensible and moving Bishop of *Cork*,

2. That such poor and insufficient Ministers are placed in many Churches, which rather drive Men away, than give them tolerable Encouragement to attend their Ministry, or Hopes of Improvement. Methinks the Thing it self should be more offensive than the Mention of it, when there is such notorious Truth in it. The Bishops cannot hinder their Institution, but some are sensible of the great easiness of some in their Admission into Orders. If awakened Souls keep at home, there is danger that sleepy Preaching may cast them into a Lethargy; if they go abroad, they are in danger of the Laws.

3. When other Means are not used, or do not overcome Dissenters, to set their Creatures upon them, doth alienate the Minds of Multitudes: We are not (say they) provided for, nor must we provide for our selves; Good Conforming Preachers dare not encourage us to go to them; and if we are received with better Welcome there, they are suspected to be as bad or worse than the Nonconformists.

And that they should be hunted and worried, and the Fleece torn from their Backs, by such a sort of Animals, of ignorant, infidel, voracious Enemies to all Religion, is a very great Affliction to the Sufferers, and Reproach upon our Religion; as if Spiritual Means were not used, or spiritual Weapons had no Power; as if Christians were to be tamed by irrational Methods; as if the Shepherd's Voice, nor his Rod and Staff could do no Good, but the scattered Sheep were given up to the Dogs, to bring them to the Fold, that prey for themselves: As if a self-created Officer, that's below a Commission, and unworthy of a Livery, had greater Virtue in him to cure Church-Divisions, than Ordained Ministers. I assure the Reader, this is written not to make him merry; And I do not know whether it will be pardoned to me, to conclude this Head with this, That 'tis no wonder the Success is no better, when no more sanctified Means and Instruments are employed to act in a Work of this Nature and Consequence.

Confid. VI. By this way the holy Ordinances of God, many choice Men for excellent Pastoral Gifts, Qualifications and Parts, and real Holiness, are brought to contempt, to great contempt; and this way is a very great Obstruction to the Encrease of Saving-Knowledge and true Religion in many. The malignant Influences of our Divisions upon Religion, is demonstrated by the affectionate Bishop of *Cork*, in his second Sermon.

** Usque ad ætatem Augustini, hoc est plus quam quodringentis post Christum natum annis, nusquam legimus Orthodoxos implorasse Cæsaris præsidium adversus Hæreticos, quum id frequentissime factum esset ab Hæreticis: Nunquam tamen hoc exemplum imitari visum est Orthodoxis, donec Donatistarum & Circumcellionum percelleret pervicax & insaniabilis insania &c.*

Erasmus in Respons. de Inquisitione.

I shall limit my Observation to the same Design of Peace and Unity, and keep to the Thing in hand; That this proceeding against the Nonconformists, is of ill consequence to Religion in general. * If they were an Heretical Sect, except turbulent to the State, where have we a Rule for such a Process against them? But without disparagement, or making any offensive Comparisons between their Ministers, and their Hearers, and ours, there is no Man that can take the measure of Abilities proportioned to the Work of Christ, but must acknowledg them to come as near to the Standard, as most Men in the Age: And for their Auditors, generally they are Men of as much Aptness, Receptivity, of Apprehension, Judgment, and Experience in the Work and Way of Salvation, as any Men of their several Ranks and Qualities, in the Places where they live, and are as great Examples of Truth, Sobriety, practical Holiness;

Holiness; and are as much exercised in reading, praying, conferring, redeeming Time, walking not as Fools, but as wise, as any Men that profess Christ among us, and every way as useful Subjects. There are several Degrees of them; some have their Indiscretions, and their Mistakes, and their Heats, and their Blemishes; and what Party have not? But if the Grace of God hath appeared to any Men, and if any are taught to *deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*, as I am sure there are, there are such among them. And it is no disparagement to them, that they are scrupulous, considering remaining Ignorance: for if Men have a due sense of Sin, and have known what it is to be humbled and penitent, they must needs be fearful and tender; and then what with want of Helps, Studies, and Leisure to study Things less necessary, many of them may not be so judicious, as to dissolve the Knot of Scruples; and judging of Things according to their Use and Benefit to them, they may not be so taken with what others practise. But there are among them plain Men, of as clear Perceptions as any I ever met with, of their Education. But now both their Teachers and themselves are under the scorn and contempt of *Fanatics*, which signifies with many, what Unacquaintance, Pride, and Uncharitableness can cast upon them.

1. It is injurious to Religion, as if they that preach, pray, search the Scriptures, prove giddy, unsettled, odd, and erroneous; an irrational Sect of Men, sprung up among Men of no solidity or settlement. Hence what an Advantage doth the malignant Spirit take, to make so many ignorant and carnal Fanatics? meer Babes in Religion, that have nothing in them but what is put into their Mouths, or infecteth them with undiscerned and senseless Popery, in this Point, That the Peoples having and reading of the Scriptures, is dangerous, as disposing to Heresy and Divisions.

2. It renders the Labours of the worthiest of them suspected and despised, and this is an hindrance to our Union: for who values those Men that are not fit to preach? or whose Labours teach People to run into Fancies and Delusions? The most useful, profitable, searching Books, which the World hath most need of, are not as much as looked into by many, but rejected, because they are the Books of *Fanatics*, as they are called. Yea, more, if a Conformist have the Name of a *Fanatick*, some of our Church-Parrots will not come nigh the Door-Posts of Wisdom.

3. It is a Temptation, and I fear a prevailing one, that there is no Worship either necessary or acceptable unto God, or safe for the Soul, but the Legal in all its parts and accidents. Hence it is manifest, that all the Religion of many, stays at Church, no Sign or Mark of it brought

home to their Houses, and private Conversation.

4. Is it not manifest, that many are so prejudiced against them, as dangerous Persons, because they suffer, that they running into an extreme of Opposition, continue in a clear way of Irreligion and Damnation; so far from praying, and any thing that looks like Godly, that they live in the Confession of all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and live intemperately, unrighteously, and ungodly, in swearing, self-damning, and blaspheming.

5. Others seeing that Men, that seem to take the greatest care of their eternal Interest, are thus branded, pursued, and troubled, lie fast asleep in carnal Security, or take up in outward Formality. If God awaken them, they lie down again; and they are easily persuaded to lie down, who are not thoroughly resolved, when they observe this Way is every where spoken against. If a Man become truly penitent, of loose become strict, of careless become circumspect, of lukewarm become zealous, he is strait a Fanatick, or that way enclined: And who knows not the Power of such Suggestions and Temptations? Which prevails so far upon abundance of Men, so openly and shamefully, to be ashamed of the Ways of Christ, and of speaking of his Commandments, except it be in Cavil or Contention, contrary to the holy Psalmist, *I will speak of thy Testimonies before Kings, and will not be ashamed.* Psal. 119. 46.

6. It makes the Wicked rejoice, when they see them who condemn them, as *Noah* did the Old World, by being moved with fear, and preparing an Ark, to see them persecuted; and makes vile prophane Sinners run into an Excess of Insolence, when they have them at their mercy, or in their hands.

7. It is a Temptation to many, to do many things in an hypocritical compliance with ungodly Men, which in their Hearts they cannot allow, because at other Times and Places they express a dislike of them, for fear of staining themselves with the disgrace of being Favourers of Dissenters: I mean this in one particular of Excess of Drinking, those plausible Arts and Introductions to it; and of joining in Discourses, or not silencing them, which favor rankly loathsome of Prophaneness and Atheism.

8. It disableth good Men from doing those Works of Piety and Charity, which otherwise they would do. It is not unobserved, how bountiful the sober Dissenters are in all Collections, upon publick and unsuspected Occasions, besides many other Charges they are at, of contributing something to their Teachers, relieving particular Persons in great Wants, living hospitably. They are much weakened by Fines, Indictments, &c. and are great Losers by the Seizure of Goods above value, and underselling them, that they cannot do the Good they would: And who are enriched by

by it, but they who will never be rich, nor blest'd, till they repent and restore? It is no pleasing Consideration to any Man of any Indifferency, to see honest Mens Goods carried away, to maintain some in open Impiety.

9. It is a great Temptation to as many as love this World, to follow Christ no more openly than *Nicodemus*; for they are for a Religion that is safe and saving, if not gainful. Yea, it is a dangerous thing for a Man, a private Man, a Man and his own House, to sing Psalms, read, pray, catechise, when an Informer, hearing but a Voice, goes and informs of a Conventicle, and his Oath must be taken for the King, when really 'tis for himself, and his Master. There is sufficient Proof and Testimony of such Things as these, *See the Narrative* that some have been highly damnified for praying *out of Devon. 1671.* in their own Families.

10. It is a great Temptation to the Children of Godly Parents, to walk in Ways contrary to God and their Parents, and to beget grudgings against their Parents, when they are like to be Sufferers by their Parents Practices.

11. It is a great Temptation to Apostacy, I do not mean from a Faction or Party, but from the undoubted Offices and Duties of true Godliness. How many have, within these few Years past, fallen from the strictness of keeping the Lord's Day, of preaching twice, of hearing carefully, of taking Notes, repeating Sermons, and Family-Duties? Yea, that have turned to a contrary way of Debauchery and Impiety, as wanting strength of Grace and Courage, to own their Baptismal Vow, the Practice of the truly Pious, and their Saviour's Laws?

12. By this the Communion of Saints is much broken, and the Comfort of it lost. This Mischief is grown now to that degree, that it is criminal to hear any of them preach, or join with them in Duties in the same Family, be the Occasion never so great and excusable. Are they Christians? and shall not one Christian converse with another Christian, as a Christian, in Christian Offices? If they come to us, it is almost as bad as our going to them. And this Nonconformity deprives us in a great part of the practical Article of our Creed; for the Communion of Saints doth consist in Practice and Exercise. And had we not better spare the Things we contend for, than an Article of Faith? Or why may not a Conformist hold occasional Communion with the Nonconformists, in indisputable Duties, retaining the Liberty and Reputation of his Conformity, without suspicion? Is it because we must not offend Authority? Then certainly a greater Weight is hung upon Conformity, than it can bear, if ever it be weighed in an even Ballance. We are forward to blame the

more rigid sort of Separatists, for not coming to our Worship; and why are we so rigid as to forbear all Christian Communion with them, as if Christianity were all lost among them? O that we were as averse from other Company, as we are from them, in holy Duties! I do declare, for this very reason taken from my Creed, that I do hold mental Communion with all the holy Brethren, Partakers of the heavenly Calling, and am prepared for local and external Communion with them in all Christian Duties and Ordinances.

Confid. VII. To silence, molest and punish sound and able Ministers, and Protestant Christians, is as much as to render them altogether unserviceable to the Church and Kingdom in a time of need, and in places that need all their Labours, and to cut them off, except they be moved by force of Law to come in, and do as we do. But the Church of God in *England* and *Wales* hath great need of more such Men as they are; and some places had sat in Darkness had it not been for them. This is true, and therefore this course of proceeding with them, is detrimental to Religion it self, and to the Salvation of precious Souls. Surely, either we do not know what it is to save Souls, or we must be sensible, that it is a Work of great Study, Industry and Watchfulness; and how a small Parish is too great and numerous, without great Diligence for most of us; and how long it is, before we come to a holy dexterity in the management of our Calling. Who is sufficient so to preach, as to be a saviour of Life? But who is sufficient for publick and private Work? Some make no more of it, but to send a Man, and a wooden Staff: but the Prophet himself must stretch himself, and breath upon the dead Child, &c. It is matter of Praise to read diligently the Prayers, and preach constantly, but we know, that many must be fetched in, not by citing them first to Court, that way is much about, so far about that some are lost that way and never come in; we must go and fetch them in by our personal Applications, and Addresses to their Consciences. It is better have too many than too few, saith the Reverend Bishop of *Cork*; We have too few, if they were all admitted and encouraged. And what an unreasonable loss is it to be deprived of their Labours, who are devoted to the Work, and have as edifying a Gift of popular persuasive Argumentation as any Men? Who have been our Teachers and Examples in this kind more than they? What an Example was the most faithful and successful Mr. *Baxter*, whose Practice was copied after his *Gildas Salvianus*, and the Ministers of that Association? How diligent was Mr. *Stubbs*, Mr. *Allen*, Mr. *Wadsworth*, and others? But they were not worthy! This course we undertake to follow when we are ordained, this was the commendable Practice of the the ancient Bishops. See *Prosper de vita Contemplativa*,

templativa, l. 2. c. 2. *tales Scriptura appellat Speculatores qui speculantur actus omnium*, &c. that watch the Actions of all, how every one lives in his House, how in the City, among the Citizens, &c. *lib. 1. cap. 21.* the Chapter answers the Title; a lamentable Description of a Priest living carnally, — *Cyprian. Epist. 40.* It troubled St. *Augustin*, that his Health would not serve him to do his Office: 'It grieves me more than it doth 'you perhaps, that my Infirmary is not sufficient for all the Cares which 'the Members of Christ require of me. *Epist. 138. Clero & Populo Hypponensi*, &c. How seldom do many People, especially Women and young Ones, in Parishes of five or six Miles Dimensions, or more, come to Church? Have not they Souls? Perhaps they would be careful of them, if they were told and convinced of their Case and Danger; but O how well do they take themselves to be! and think themselves excused from saving Ordinances, because they live so far from their Churches! The Learned Dr. *Bright* saith, somewhere in his Book of Prayer, that upon computation, there is a Priest for every fifty Persons in *France*. But alas! here in *England* there is not a Minister wholly for two or three Parishes, in many Counties; and this where I live, I have known a poor silly Curat travel on foot four or five Miles to read Prayers, in some very populous Parishes, where Esquires and Gentlemen live very thick. While we are careless of Souls, we teach poor Souls to be careless of their Salvation. If the Cry of spiritual Murther, Damnation, of Fire, of Hunger and Thirst, had any Entrance into our Hearts, we should mind Realities more than Formalities, and not persecute Preachers for Preaching, but send them forth in Peace, and commend them to God. But Preachers, yet not Preachers, make an Outcry against their Preaching; and others, that never knew the Need or Benefit of it, cannot endure them in their Coasts: But they who are more concerned for the Salvation of Souls, and Prosperity of the Work of Christ, should be otherwise affected. — But to use them as they are used, is not tenderly to consult the eternal Salvation and Good of many People; and suppose them as disaffected to the Church, whose Happiness they intensely wish, and would certainly part with more, if they had it, to come in again into the publick Service, than ever it cost them to forsake it, both against their Wills, and against their Interest, Ease, Quietness, and Honour. I am confident of what I write, tho I have not asked any of them the Question, because I do verily believe them to be wise, rational, and good Men. If some Places can be without them, tho I know not one, send them to Places which are in danger of being lost for want of such as they; and send them, as it is fit they should be received, (*How beautiful are the Feet of them that bring good Tidings!*) with respect and honour.

Confid. VIII. As many Places have great need of them, so the Lord hath been with them, his Work hath prospered in their hands, even when their Disgraces and Dangers have been a great Obstruction. I never mean such a Conversion (as ends in Destruction) to Conceitedness, Pride, Faction; but I mean that which is to Salvation, by Holiness, Righteousness, and Peace. And for all their Hazards, Reproaches, and Disgraces, an understanding and wise People hear them, which they would never do, if they did not receive Edification. Is there nothing but Humor and Affectation in them? Affectation of what? of Fines, Losses, Frowns, Threatnings, Diminution of Civil Privileges, as far as some can deprive them? If this be their Hypocrisy, verily they have their Reward. They go to hear them for Scruples and Fanaticism. Let a Divine repent of such

So the Heathen objected; *Sed non ideo bonum, quia multos convertit.* — *Quid hoc mali est, cujus reus gaudet?* &c. Tertull. *Apol. chap. 1.*

a meditated Calumny and Asperision, lest he fall into them. *Whatever another intends to do, that dares to make the Success of their Ministry of the Gospel, the Power of God to Salvation upon rational Souls, to lead Christian Lives, no greater Argument of divine Approbation, than the spreading of Mahumetanism, and the Success of the Alcoran; if he never found the Efficacy of Grace, of the Spirit, Word, and Sacraments upon his*

Heart, let him turn his Thoughts and his Time, if not his Pen, to make ready for his Judgment, and to secure his Peace, rather than to rake into Sores and Ulcers, and keep them open, to get Money, as some Beggars do their Sores.

Confid. IX. A safe and speedy Union of Dissenters, as nearly united as possibly can be made, is most desirable, that there may be a happy End put to their many Sufferings. Religion and Humanity can take no pleasure in the deserved Punishments of Men; the Murmurs and Complaints of Sufferers stir and move Compassions; and Pity holds the Hand even of Justice, in all Cases in which Necessity is not urgent and manifest. The Evil of Separation hath been opened, when the Evil of their Sufferings hath not been touched upon: They are urged with the first, but that is but one Side of the Evil; let us search into the other Sore, to take the whole Weight and Compass of the Mischief that lies upon the Protestant Religion; and both run down from the same Cause; and he that would stop the Current of Evil in divided Streams, and dry up the Flood of Afflictions and Miseries, must stop it at the Well-head of the Cause. They are urged to enter into the Communion of the Church as by Law established,

established, because of the Mischiefs of their Separation; and it would be a special Service to move our Governors to make their Return as easy as may be, by opening the Scandal of their Sufferings. If their Consent to our Injunctions were gained, the Controversy would be at an end, and this Prosecution also: But that being not like to be attained this way, the Continuance of the Separation is more for the good and profit of the Church, than their Sufferings; for while they enjoy their Liberty, the Gospel is preached, and they that are regenerate, and called, and gathered to Christ, are gathered to the Catholick Church, tho' not united unto a particular Church, in some certain Bonds of external Communion. But if they were totally suppressed, and where they are most narrowly watched and kept in, thousands of Souls would lose the Benefit of their Labours, and their Hearts are like to be more estranged from us, and the Church will still lose the Content and Comfort of their Communion. The supposed and aggravated Sin and Evil of the Separation, is doubled by their Sufferings, and made more incurable by the Exasperation. We see and taste the Fruit of above twenty Years Proceedings, and better cannot be expected, but much worse may be feared.

To argue for a Release from their Sufferings, because they have suffered deeply, may seem weak and insequent; but take them in a Complex of Causes and Circumstances, and I do hope the Argument may prove a Matter of Consideration, to them that are concerned in these great Matters.

If a Man should move for a Suspension of the Laws against Malefactors, thus; Millions have suffered Imprisonment and Death, and therefore spare them; the Argument is not only ridiculous and weak, but weak and sinful: because they are Malefactors, and the Laws of God, both natural and revealed, require it; and there would be no Safety to the Lives of Innocents, nor of Civil Rights and Possessions.

But to argue, Our dissenting Brethren have suffered much, therefore forbear to inflict more Punishments upon them, is not without some Strength, and convincive Evidence.

1. The performance of Religious Exercises in a different Form, is no such Offence and Crime, as deserves to be punished, before the Penal Laws decree the Penalties. The Difference of the Administrations, is made by the diverse using or disusing of Things indifferent, some extending their Liberty further than others. To use Christian Liberty (wisely, and as much as may be, inoffensively) is no punishable Crime, but a Duty; and if there be not a Liberty in indifferent Things, there is none at all.

2. But if it were a Matter punishable, yet of such Things as are punishable, before a Penal Law be made: *Sed non ideo sequitur eam (penam) debere exigi, quia hoc p. ndit ex connexionē finium ob quos p. na instituta est, cum ipsa p. na;* as Grotius writes, *De Jure Bell. & Pac. lib. 2. cap. 4. §. 22.*

Now what can be the Ends of these Penal Constitutions?

1. Unity of Mind with our Governours in these Things enjoined; that seems to be the Reason of the Assent and Consent; which none can be of, but such as were so minded before it was required, all Reasons and Circumstances perpended. But that all should be of the same mind, is impossible in our State: That's an End not attainable, and they who propose it, propose only for themselves, and them of the same Judgment with them, and exclude the rest, whom the Lord hath received. It was a wise, and is a celebrated Saying of the Emperor Maximilian the Second, to Augustus of Saxe, when he interposed for Peace, in the Ubiquitarian Controversies and Persecution. The Duke told him, he would have all his Ministers agree with him, and among one another: to which the Emperor answered, *Ego in negotiis ad fidem & conscientiam pertinentibus, nec ausim vel velim cuiquam offerre necessitatem aliquam coactione: Scio irrito conatu, &c.* I know that will be lost Labour, and that it is grievous and dangerous in it self. — *Id nunquam perficies, inquit Imperator, neque nostrum est imperare Conscientiis, aut ad fidem quemque vi agere.* Perellius *Hist. Carcerum*, p. 361. Hoornbeck *Summa Controv. cum Lutheranis*, p. 657.

2. The Peace of the Church and State may be aim'd at. Can there be Peace in the House of God, whilst one Fellow-Servant smites another? Surely that is not the way to Peace. Which brings to my mind that of the Learned Hornbeck, (*Oratione de Ecclesiarum inter se Communionē*): 'If we shall receive or treat them otherwise than Brethren, whom Christ doth not disdain, or think unworthy of so great a Name, Place, and Honour. *Atque hoc Christiane charitatis communionisq; est fundamentum,* 'This is the Foundation also of all Christian and Ecclesiastical Love and Charity, among all Christian Churches and Congregations through the World. Let others despise the common Name of Brethren, I never call to mind, without a singular Affection of Piety, that holy and single-hearted Custom among the Ancients, both of the Jewish and Christian Age, when they saluted one another by no other Name than that of Brethren: So did the Tongue express the Mind, and testify their Faith and Love, &c. *Communicatio pacis, & appellatio fraternitatis,* as Tertullian speaks. Faith and Love to God, and Reconciliation with his heavenly Majesty, as a Father, a Participation of the same divine Nature, a mutual Acknowledgment of the Marks and Lineaments of God's Children,

a Consent in the same substantial Truths, and speaking the Truth in Love, and forbearing one another, are more sure Ways to Peace, than Menaces and Force. *‘At quanti dignius fratres & dicuntur & habentur ;* who have acknowledged one Father, God ; who have drunk in the same Spirit of Holiness ; who have breathed out of one Womb of the same Ignorance, to the same Light of Truth. *Tertull. ad Gentes.* But we have other kind of Marks and Names of Distinction ; we seem to reject all spiritual Kindred with them, and extinguish Love, to compose Differences, and to make Peace. Will these Ways ever lead us to Peace ?

2. For the Peace of the State, this may be thought of. Through God's great Mercy we find, that the Controversy of *Conformity* and *Nonconformity* hath not disturbed the Quietness of the State, but as some have made use of it : And Church-Peace should be most earnestly followed, that the State may know the Blessedness of being incorporated with the Church in the same Government ; and finding the Blessing of Religion to be so great, may be the more tender of its Welfare. The Dissenters have not only obeyed Warrants, but have made their appearance without Warrants, when but called to it by some that had no Warrants, so far have they been from giving occasion to the *Militia* to come armed upon them ; but some will have it so. And the Dissenters give, or are ready to give, the same Security for the Peace, that others do that enjoy it.

3. The Dissenters complain of the Laws, but much more for their Sufferings, either besides, or contrary to, or above the Laws ; and to put an end to their Sufferings, is to put an end to the Illegalities of many of their Prosecutors. The many Appeals and Actions, or the forbearing to make Appeals when there hath been apparent Cause, the many Errors found out in Courts of Justice, where it hath been done them in the Proceedings of Informers and others, prove this.

4. To put an End to these Vexations and Sufferings, is the only way to restrain much Impiety and Unrighteousness in many Men, and to deliver them from provoking & tempting God to plague & punish them that carry on this Work. The Spirit of Persecution entred not into the Church, till Men walked after the Flesh ; and after that Persecutors have fallen upon the Servants of God, the Wrath of God pursued the Persecutors. Men should abstain from declaring their dislike, disaffection, and enmity to Godliness, if they loved themselves.

5. Yea, moreover, I do not see how any of the Instruments in the Sufferings of our Christian Brethren, can go on, and not sin grievously against God, Men, and Themselves. It is plain, that they neglect all the solemn and publick Worship of God, the standing Means of their own Salvation, while they lie in wait to take the Worshippers of God : And

what their Practice is in other Duties of Religion, Truth, and common Honesty, is well known: They come behind none of their Father's Children, in Lies, False Witnesses, confirmed by impudent and notorious — Swearing.

6. If this Way be not pleasing to God, try another; if it be not blessed with Success, try some other. It was the wise Counsel of *Livia* to *Augustus*, perplexed about the Conspiracy of *Cinna*, which the wife Emperor took: *Fac quod Medici solent, qui ubi usitata remedia non procedant, tentant contraria; severitate nihil profecisti.* See *de Clement.* It is known indeed, that the Advantages of all temporal Penalties to the Catholick Church changed *St. Augustin's* Judgment from Lenity to some Severity; but never changed it from a sweet Moderation, to a Rigor, making no difference between some and others; as appear in his several Letters of Intercession for the *Donatists*. And for all that, some are too strict upon *St. Augustin*, as to note, that he but narrowly got to Heaven before *Hippo* was taken, for that hand which he had in that Motion. The Severity of the Northern Monarchs, in *Sweden* and *Denmark*, is but ill applied to our Case, who cannot rigorously establish our Conformity, without the Extirpation or Banishment of an excellent great Number of Christians, that have descended from, and whose Predecessors sprung up together with the Reformation.

Lastly; Consider, Whether it be not better for the Church, and the Christian Kingdom, to take off these Afflictors from chasing that part of Christ's divided Flock, than suffer them to go on: For how can that be pleasing to Christ, wherein the Enemy of Mankind, the Enemy of Christians above all Mankind, and the Enemy of Protestants more than of any Christians, because of their clearer Light and Purity, and the Enemy of the sincerely Pious above all other Protestants, hath so openly appeared and acted, in Lies, Scandals, False-Witness, Perjuries, Violence, and Unmercifulness. This is a surer way to lose, than to gain them.

Object. If they are lost, who can help it? How can they be united to us, that are not united among themselves? They are very far from being of a piece. Besides *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, there are *Antinomians*, *Millenaries*, *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*; should we yield to any one of these, we are yet as far from gaining thereto, as we are now from uniting all. Thus the Reverend Peace-maker of *Cork*, pag. 29.

But this Objection of the Difficulty, is not past some considerable Reply.

1. What if the Bundle of Arrows be broken, yet let us gather up as many as we can; our Artillery will be the more against our common Enemy.

Enemy. Gain any of them, and we shall be the more and stronger by that Addition.

12. Except the *Presbyterians*, the most of the other Dissenters agree in their Modes of Government; so that what you grant to one Party, is granted to more.

3. Is it Reason and Charity, that those who would unite, shall not, because all will not, upon some Abatements?

4. Gain some, and they will help to draw in others.

5. The more are united, the fewer remain to be tolerated; by which Toleration I mean no more, but a forbearing one another in Love, with the use of Gospel-Means to convince and gain them, if possible; and by the Civil Sword to restrain and suppress them, when it shall be necessary, and dangerous to the State, but not before.

And I crave leave to make a little Digression upon this Head, respecting the several Parties named.

1. The *Presbyterian*, so called, doth not insist upon that Form of Government; He offers to come in.

2. The chief of the *Congregational* are Men of great Worth, Learning, Sobriety, and Holiness; and they are but few, and never like to be many, in the Countries, and but few in Cities and populous Places.

3. The *Anabaptist* is an Independent in Government, for ought I know: what will do the one good, will do the other, in that point. And these are either simply scrupulous in the Point of Baptism, or else compounded of other Notions. The first sort are reputed peaceable and holy Men, by them that write against them, as Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Obed Wills*, and Mr. *Joseph Whiston*. The second may be kept in Order and Quiet, as easily as our careless, ignorant, and debauched Sects, that go under another Name.

4. The *Antinomian*, as such, is a Doctrinal Dissenter, yet thinks in the point of Imputation, he is the Antipapist, and the Protestant, and falls in among others in point of Church-Discipline.

5. The *Millenarian*, is either notionally so, and then his Faith is to himself; or anti-magistratically, and so he is to be watched and coerced, and Presbyterians and Independents will help.

Lastly; The *Quaker* must have the Right of Humanity. The Honour of all good Men Sir *Matthew Hale*, determined their Right in the Point of Marriage. My Soul grieves for them. Some of them, that I know, are a sort of Christians; they do not give enough to the Scriptures, which as far as I know, is their great Error, from whence the rest proceed. Their spiritual Loss to me seems vast. They are gone far from us indeed, but I wish it were considered, that some Magistrates, in their extreme Heats and Violences, did urge them with Oaths when there was no cause for it.

and picking quarrels with their Scruples, they fell to a hasty and violent Execution of their own violent Passions, more than the Law. They who scrupled swearing, did call God to Witness, and did protest and promise Loyalty and Obedience, but it was not accepted: they offered the Security of their Words, and their Bodies to the Law, when found Transgressors against the Peace; But they were hurried and crowded into Prisons, and ill used in many Prisons, and so became hardened, and at length modell'd into an exact Policy. Yet they are Men and Natives; and whether Men shall forfeit their Goods and Liberties, for a Dissent in Religion, by any Gospel-Rule, or Rules of Christian Equity, is a great Question, and the Negative past doubt as yet. If they have a natural Right to Marriage, and those Contracts stand, tho not made after the Liturgy, they have a natural Right to Society among us; and our Rule is, To walk honestly towards them, as they that are without. There are many Things commendable in them.

These are the noted Sects looked upon with an evil eye, as dangerous Men; and yet there are other Sects very pernicious, but what Course is taken with them? Are there not *Hobbiſts* and *Atheiſts*? were there ever more of these since the Reformation than now? Witness the great Numbers of Sermons preached and printed, the great Numbers of Tracts, the large Volumes of Sir *Matthew Hale*, and others, against Atheism. Are these multiplied without cause? if not, there is a great encrease of Atheism. What shall be done with the Sects of Infidels, Blasphemers, God-damners, Drunkards, Gamesters, Whoremongers, and their Meeting-Houses? Irregular Men without Callings, Pamphleting Clubs, Paper-Incendiaries, and the Society of Beggars and Vagrants, that are of no Church? What do you call those Places, where many of our Nobility and Gentry either learned, or were confirmed in their Levity, Vanity, and are so tainted with a sort of Wit and Words, that makes the Word of Christ, and of Wisdom, unfavoury and mean? where many have learned the Gifts of Confidence and Immoralities? where Swords have been drawn, and Blood shed, but never indicted for Riots? Where have Persons learned to put off God, and Conscience, and Counsels, with witty Answers, to excuse their long lying in Bed, till Prayers, and Sermons, and Sacraments are over; or their long dressing till Dinner, to make their Afternoon-Visits before some Idols or Images like themselves? Who can reckon all the Sects that dissent from Christ's Gospel, from their Baptismal Vows; that say they are for the Publick, tho they rarely visit them; for the Religion established by Law, with a secret Reservation, except what requires them to be pure and holy? O the low Estate of Christian Religion, even among them that have the general Name of it! May it never fare worse with Persons and Places for Religious Exercises, than with most of these, who perhaps

never

never had more than a private Reproof, and they will be sparing of Complaints!

And now I turn in from this Digression, to give a few Narratives of the Nonconformists Sufferings, in which it will plainly appear,

1. Perhaps no Law was ever executed with more Violence and Partiality, or Proceedings with less Success, and more Mistakes and Errors in Proceedings, more arbitrarily and illegally, than those against Dissenting Protestants.

2. It is no wonder they have been so unsuccessful to bring them in, if you respect both Persons and Methods unlike to effect that End.

3. How it concerns all Men, according to their Places and Power, to petition a Cessation of these Proceedings : (1.) To put an end to the gross Wickedness of many Instruments, who take occasion from the Laws to exercise their Irreligion and Wickedness. (2.) To prevent further Judgments upon many particular Families and Persons, and the provoking of Christ to take away his Gospel from us, when many of his Servants are so ill used, and his Ordinances blasphemed, and Wickedness committed.

4. The various Appearances of God, both in Judgment and Mercy, in this very Proceeding.

5. Let it be judged and resolved soberly, whether this way be not a greater Scandal to the Protestant Religion, than the Separation is, as great as it is.

6. Those who are glad of the Law, have no cause to think the very Law it self of any great use to their Design, provided, (1.) They proceed against the Nonconformists strictly according to the Scope of the Law : (2.) According to the Direction of it, as to Proofs and Conviction : And if Men did not go beyond it, they could never have done what they have done.

7. It will be manifest, that they are not punished for Sedition, Rebellion, or any Crime of that Infamy and Note, by the various kinds of Prosecutions and Punishments.

8. Some are punished in several Courts, and several ways.

9. How the Adversaries of the *Nonconformists* have been defeated of their Purposes ; some brought to Ruine, and miserable Ends ; some penitent and converted, and all or most frustrated of their Designs.

10. How grossly many have acted against all Humanity and Law, against God, against that Reverence which is due to the King, and his own Act. And many other Things will occur in the ensuing Narratives.

I am not void of Sense, as not to know what a tender Point I have in hand, and what Persons are like to be provoked; but I do write to call them to Repentance, to move others to Compassion, and to give Warning to them that need it; and lastly, to satisfy the In-

See the Rev. Bishop of Cork, pag. 79. credulity of some of eminent place, that look upon the Reports of some of the *Nonconformists* as next to fabulous, aggravated, to make their Inflictors odious, and their Sufferings grievous. My Collections are but few, in comparison of what others may make, who have better Advantages and Helps than I have. And if any Person shall reproach me, as dishonouring the Government of the Church, let them know, (1.) The Things I write are not Fictions and Calumnies. (2.) These Instruments and the Government are not all one. (3.) It is fit these Things should be known, to prevent Divine Wrath and Vengeance.

I might digest this Account into several Periods: Before the Act of Uniformity came out, and after: before the Act against *Conventicles*, and *Oxford Fiv.-Mile Act*, and after: till the King's Indulgence, and after. And also shew by what Acts the Dissenters have suffered, and to what degrees. And I desire it may be noted, That there hath been no respect shewed,

1. To Men of approved Loyalty.
2. Nor to Men in Episcopal Orders.
3. Nor to their reading of the Common-Prayer.
4. Nor to the King's Declaration, before the Parliament did address to call it in.

By all which it will clearly appear, what kind of Men, and to what Scope they acted, that have appeared most active in these Proceedings.

I begin with the famous Sufferings of Mr. *Andrew Parsons*, Rector of *Wem* in *Shropshire*. In Decemb. 1660, he was fetched from his own House to *Salop*, by six Souldiers, who pretended to have, but shewed no Warrant. The Marshal told him, he was his Prisoner, and next morning brought him before the *Deputy-Lieutenants*, who asked him, If he would take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy? he told them, He had taken them long ago, and would cheerfully take them again, if they required it; and did so.

They told him, Complaints were made against him, (1.) For not Conforming. (2.) For seditious Preaching. To the first, he pleaded the King's Declaration. 2dly; He desired the second might be explained, and Particulars proved. They charged him with saying, *There were more Sins committed (then) in one Month, than in twenty Years before*: Inferring thence,

thence, besides the Scandal to the King's Government, that he accounted the King's Murder no Sin, which was committed within that time. His Accusers were then in Town, but appeared not; and he was discharged of his Imprisonment without Fees, and appointed to appear, when his Accusers should be summoned to appear face to face, and was admonished to conform.

Easter following, one of his worst Enemies, by a Faction, was made Church-warden for the Year 1661. And among other things, he encouraged the Profanation of the Lord's Day, and opposed an ancient Lecture which of course returned to that Town, and procured a Letter from the *Deputy-Lieutenants*, to a Justice of Peace in the Parish, to hinder it. The last Tuesday in November, hearing no Bell ring, he went to know the Reason: He found the Church-Doors lock'd against him, and that Church-warden owned it was his Act, and told him he should not go in, tho he told him he would preach himself. But by an Accident he got in, tho with difficulty, and some danger; and two Lecturers preached to a great Auditory of Neighbour-Ministers, and People. Next day he, the Preachers, and Ministers that heard, were by the High-Constable summoned before the *Deputy Lieutenants*: He and one of the Preachers (Mr. Lawrence) were committed to Prison, the rest checked and dismissed. After four days Mr. Lawrence was released; but Mr. Parsons was detained, upon pretence of other Matter, amounting to Sedition, if not Treason. He could not obtain the Sight of the Articles, yet obtained leave to return home upon Security, and limited not to go above five Miles from home, and to appear when sent for. In the mean time one of the *Deputy Lieutenants* told him, they could not rest for his Adversaries Importunity, who with nine more, and some of them in Drink, gave in Depositions against him.

Jan. 29. The Marshal, with five Troopers, came galloping to his Door, (where he met them) entred his House, shewed a Warrant from Sir E. B. Commander in chief of the Forces in *Salop*, to bring him before him; who told him, he had an Order from the Deputy to commit him close Prisoner, under the Marshal's hand, for Things of a high Nature. During six Weeks Imprisonment, he used all means to obtain a Copy of the Depositions; at the end of which six Weeks, the Power of the Deputies expiring by the Act for the *Militia*, they resolv'd to leave him bound, and commit him, as Justices of the Peace, upon suspicion of Treason, to the Common-Goal.

March 3. on the same Day, came down a Letter from the Right-Honourable the Lord *Newport*, Lord Lieutenant, from *London*, which one that signed his Commitment intercepted, and kept from him ten days, and

was afterwards brought him by a Friend of the Gentleman, which gave Order for his Release, upon Security to return when sent for: but he was not released.

After eight Weeks abode in the Common-Goal, the Lord N. brought down a Commission of *Oyer and Terminer* out of the Crown-Office, with a special Order under the Seal-Manual, to the same Lord, and one of the Justices in *Ludlow*, and eight more Gentlemen, (whereof three only were present) to try the said *A. P. Clerk*, late of *Wem*.

May 28. the Commission was executed, the Justice gave the Charge to this purpose: A Minister was to be tried, all *Presbyterian Ministers* reflected upon, among whom Mr. *Baxter* was particularly named. In the Afternoon the Grand-Inquest brought in their Bill. The Court was guarded with Souldiers; Mr. *Parsons* was brought to the Bar, commanded to hold up his hand; the Indictment was read, and he required to plead.

Before he pleaded, he, after much earnestness in desiring, and several Denials, was allowed to speak to the Court, which he did briefly, and as well as he could, being abused by word and deed, by a Souldier that stood by to daunt him. He blessed God, that at length he might know for what he was so long imprisoned; that it was a Privilege to be tried by a Peer of the Realm, whose Honour made up the defect of an Oath; hoped the rest of the Gentlemen, being Persons of great Repute and Abilities, and was confident nothing should be done but according to Law and Equity: He heard well of the Jury, and presumed, they had the Conscience and Discretion to judge of his Prosecutors, as they found them free from Malice, Partiality, and a bad Life.

He craved a Copy of his *Indictment*, and Council. He was earnestly commanded to plead, or they would proceed against him as Mute; which he did, first begging his Pleading might not be a Prejudice to him, as to his Exceptions against the *Indictment*; which was promised. After which he pleaded, *Not guilty*, and put himself upon God and his Country.

He was commanded to hold up his hand a second time, and another *Indictment* was read; which he did as before.

He was commanded a third time to hold up his hand, and a third *Indictment* was read, which was only for *Nonconformity*, to which he presently pleaded.

His learned Council first moved for Copies of the *Indictments*. Copies of the two latter were granted; but the first denied; but being read to them again, they took such notice of it; that they were enabled to plead to it next morning, with great satisfaction.

The Matter of the Indictment was: 'Not having the Fear of God &c. and by the Instigation of the Devil, and a malicious Mind against the King and Government, to bring his People into hatred of his Person and Government, did maliciously preach, *Octob. 13. 1661.*

'1. *There was more Sin committed now in a Month, than in a Year, for twenty Years past.*

'2. *When there were good Judges and Kings in Israel, the People feared the Lord; but when there were wicked Judges and Kings, then every one did what was good in his own Eyes.*

'3. *There was better Preaching now, than was since the Apostles Times.*

'4. *That God will call us all to account for our Vows and Protestations, I must not name the Covenant.*

These Words were put in the Indictment, and made to come under the Act for the Preservation of the King's Person.

The Words in the second Indictment were: *That a King, who is driven out of his Kingdom by his Subjects, and afterwards by Providence he entreats peaceably, and then setteth his Militia; and then having made himself strong, beginneth to play his Pranks, and rules at his pleasure, like a King or Tyrant: So the Devil comes to a Man's Elbow, and then gets possession of his Heart, and then will play his Tricks.*

But the Words spoken by him were these, and in his Notes, and attested by four Men who wrote after him, and ready to be testified by twenty more ready in Court; speaking of the Power and Kingdom of the Devil, which he got by degrees in wicked Mens Hearts: *It is with the Devil, as with a King, who when he is settled in his Dominion, hath disposed of his Militia, and Ministers of State, he may do what he will; Indeed till this be done, he may do as he may: So Satan, when he hath once put out the Eyes of the Conscience, and seared it, and made the Will of his Party, and charmed the Affections, he may now do what he will.*

It grew late, and his Prosecutors were not called till the next day; therefore he only asserted his Innocency, and Cleanness of Conscience, that he said nothing to bring his Loyalty into suspicion, or himself under the Law. But Judge T. aggravated the Words, in the most uncharitable Construction, at large, and said in his Conscience, he meant it of the King.

He pleaded, the Time limited in the Act was past before indicted, and other Arguments, which his Counsel did learnedly and rationally manage: But the Judge told them, the Court would over-rule. Next day he was brought to the Bar, desired his Adversaries might be near him, face to face; but it was not granted, but stood where he could seldom hear them.

The Jury being called to pass on the first Indictment, he moved, he might make peremptory Challenges; the Judge answered, No. Of Sixty eight that were said to be returned, there were but three or four of them that were called; the rest were privately sent to: They lived remote from him, and so he could not challenge with cause. The Prosecutors were nine, but most of them were passive, drawn in by the Subtily of the Church-warden, and his Brother, who swore directly the Words in the first Indictment, but missed the Time when he spake. Mr. *Parsons* denied the Words; and his Counsel pleaded, the Words were not criminal. The Jury being instructed, were sent forth, and presently returned him, *Guilty*, and followed the Instructions more than the Evidence; as one of themselves told a Friend of Mr. P. And so it proved, as his Prosecutors had given out.

Such another Jury past upon the second Indictment, of Strangers, not a third part of them mentioned in the Return.

The Church-warden and his Brother swore the very Words; and a third, the Substance, but differing from them.

Mr. P. denied the Words, and had four substantial Witnesses, who had taken the Words exactly from his Mouth, when he preached. These, and twenty more, did assert the Truth in another place, who were not regarded in the Court.

His Counsel pleaded, The Words were not proved; and if proved, were not within the Act.

Mr. *Parsons* did openly assert his Loyalty, by running several Hazards of Life and Estate, when the King passed with his Army to *Worcester*; and that he sent a Horse and Arms to the *Chester* Business; besides his constant Praying for him on occasional Preaching, his Adversaries being Judges.

But, as it was foretold, the Jury brought him in, *Guilty*.

The Sentence was, for the first Indictment he was fined an hundred Pounds.

The like for the second; and to lie in Prison till the Fines were paid.

He was before his Conviction made incapable of any Ecclesiastical Preferment. After Sentence past, he only said, *Blessed be God*.

During the Trials many Incivilities past: A grave and reverend Minister of *Shrewsbury* was struck by a Souldier in open Court; and other godly and reverend Ministers of the Country were scornfully thrust out of the Court; and his Friends in Town durst not be present at his Trial: And Friends and Foes concluded he should die, or at least be undone.

After his Trial, he continued near three Months in Prison, till the Lord *Newport*, unknown to him, procured the King's Pardon for his Fine. His

Living

Living was presently sequestred by the Chancellor of *Litchfield*. And perhaps the Greatness of his Parsonage made him the more obnoxious ; for he told them in open Court, that his Benefice was condemned long ago, and that 400 *l.* was bidden for it by a great Man in the County ; the Loss of which amounts by this time to between five and six thousand Pounds.

A Gentleman was tried with him, for stabbing his own Servant, of which there was clear Proof, and his Nose fell a bleeding in open Court, but was brought in, *Not guilty*.

One of the Jury, when he had considered what was done, came afterward much dejected to Mr. P. and told him, the Foreman went against the Sence of the Major Part : He also went to the Judg, and told him so, who replied, he need not trouble himself about that, with other Words.

And this was the End of this great Malice and Violence of ill Men.

Let us observe : A Minister of approved Loyalty, who ventured Life and Estate for the King's Restauration, at *Worcester*, and in *Cheshire*, becomes often imprisoned, brought, like a Traytor, to hold up his Hand, which he had often lifted up to God in Prayer for the King ; the Court guarded with Troopers, and not the Sheriffs Men ; his Friends and Comforters were not permitted to stand by him ; the Indictments found, against better Evidence of better Auditors, even four that wrote Sermon-Notes, against the common Sense of a Jury made : And after all this (loyal) Traitor (for before the Trial, and in it, his Words were said to amount to Treason) is only Fined, committed till it be paid, and after three Months, the Fine remitted. And this formidable Trial was on part of the high Day, *May 29.* in which one that had prevailed with God to see it, more than all his Adversaries, had no matter of Joy left him upon it, but the rejoicing of his own Conscience.

This brings to my mind, how touchy and captious many Men were at Preachers and Sermons in those Days, of which I could give several Instances in but one eminent Conforming Minister, who suffered very much by quarrellous and injudicious Hearers.

About the same time many eminent and good Ministers were brought into Trouble and Prisons ; and 'tis not unlikely but the Judg might mean the Presbyterians in *Worcestershire*, of which an Account is printed and abridged by Mr. *Care*, 2d Part of the *History of the Popish Plots*.

Was it like that any thing of Accommodation, or Union of our woful Breaches, could ensue such Proceedings ? Is the Suspicion groundless, that there was a Design to keep out such Men as these ? And that Politicians made great use of these Mock-Plots, to give colour to their Designs,

which afterwards they formed. And some thought themselves never well in, unless some other might be ejected. Nonconformity was a Crime in Mr. P. before our Act of Uniformity came out, and whilst the King's Declaration only commended the Use of the old Common-Prayer-Book, as far as Men could go; and declared, no Man should be punished for Nonconformity.

Mr. *John Whitlock*, Vicar of *St. Mary's* in *Nottingham* after the King's Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs came forth, and before the Act of Uniformity took place, was indicted at the Sessions in *Nottingham*, for not reading Common-Prayer.

July 2. He was cited into the Ecclesiastical Court; and in case he should refuse to read Common-Prayer in the Surplice, in that Parish-Church, he should be suspended within the Archdeaconry of *Nottingham*, and his Church to be sequestred.

Mr. *John Barret* was suspended the same time; and *July 7.* the Order of the Court passed for the publication of their Suspension, for not obeying the Monition of the Court. Upon the same day there was an Order of the Court for sequestering the Profits, with this Expression, *Cum jam legitime vacat, & Curato caret.* [Note, This was before the Suspension was published and denounced, and whilst the King's Declaration promised Indemnity.]

In the same manner was Mr. *Jo. Barret* indicted, suspended, and his Church (*St. Peter's* in *Nottingham*) sequestred, and he forced to leave his Free-hold in which he lived.

July 26. 1662. Mr. *William Reynolds*, Lecturer of *St. Mary's* in *Nottingham*, was peremptorily inhibited Preaching, and receiving any Profits, and to appear at the Consistory-Court at *York*, *August 8.* following; at which time no Articles were produced against him, yet he was suspended, and referred to the Visitation, *Septem. 9.* following; at which he appeared, and received these Articles: ' (1.) No Man, by the Laws and Constitutions of this Realm, is to preach, and administer the Sacraments, unless Episcopally ordained. (2.) Notwithstanding which, he hath so done in the Parish of *St. Mary Nottingham.* (3.) About *July*, he was inhibited Preaching in *St. Mary's*, and in any other Place in the Diocese of *York*, (which was not in the Inhibition) and about *August* was suspended. (4.) Yet once or more he had preached there, (which was not true.) He refused to give his Answer under his Hand, because the Articles infringed the Act of Indemnity; for which he was admonished three times, immediately one after another, and then excommunicated,

by

by Dr. Burwell, Chancellor of York; and Septemb. 15. issued out his Order for the publication of it, *propter ipsius manifestam contumaciam in non exhibendo responsa articulis.* Hearing of a purpose to take out the Writ *De Excommuni. capiend.* he was necessitated to go to London; and upon suggestion in the Court of Common-Pleas, of the Violation of the Act of Indemnity, the Lord Chief-Justice *Bridgman*, and the other Judges, granted him an Order, *Hilar. 14.* In Easter Term following, he was constrained to London, and to stay there the whole Term, to see if Dr. B. would shew Cause, but he never appeared, and so Mr. R. heard no more of it, tho' it was not taken off till the last Act of Indemnity. All which was a great Charge to Mr. Reynolds.

It is well known, what Endeavours were used, to remove the Reverend and Learned Dr. Tuckney, from his Professorship of Divinity, and Mastership of St. John's in Cambridge, betimes, Anno 1640. before he came to the Trial of Nonconformity by Articles; which could not assist him. But a gracious Letter from the King was procured, and submitted to by the said Reverend Doctor; a Copy of which is as followeth.

C. R.

Whereas we are credibly informed, that Dr. Anthony Tuckney, Master of St. John's College, and one of the Professors of Divinity in our University of Cambridge, is well stricken in Years, and by reason of his Age, and some Infirmities of Body, may not hereafter be so well able to undergo the Burthen of those two Places, We, out of Our Princely Care, both of that Our University, and the said Dr. Tuckney, do judge it meet, that he the said Dr. T. before the end of this instant June, do recede from the aforesaid Mastership, and Professors Place, with the Rectory of Summersham, annexed thereunto by the Grace and Favour of Our Royal Grandfather: Which Signification of Our said Pleasure, if the said Dr. T. shall submit unto, We shall be so well-pleased with that his Submission, that We shall graciously accept thereof, and will be ready to remember it for his Good, upon any just occasion. And further, taking into Our Princely Consideration, the great Pains and Diligence of the said Doctor, in the discharge of the said Professors Place, without that Benefit which should have been received by him from the said Rectory of Summersham, (which, during the late unhappy and rapacious Times, was unjustly detained from him) upon that his Submission, Our Will and Pleasure is, and We do hereby order, That whatsoever Person, during the natural Life of the said Dr. T. shall after his Cession, be elected or promoted to the said Professors Place, shall, before their respective Admissions thereunto, give sufficient Assurance in Law to the said

Dr.

Dr. T. for the Yearly Payment of 100 l. out of the Rectory of Summersham, to the said Dr. T. (for the Reward of his former Pains) by even and equal Portions, at four usual Feasts of the Year; i. e. at the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, at the Annunciation of the S. Virgin, the Birth of St. John Baptist, and the Feast of Michael the Archangel; during the Continuance of the said Professors, and the natural Life of the said Dr. T. any Grant or Statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at our Court at
Whitehall, June 1. 1661.

By his Majesty's Command,

EDW. NICHOLAS.

The Doctor received the 100 l. per an. many Years, from his Successor in both his Places, Dr. Gunning, the now Lord Bishop of Ely.

Some went another way to work against some eminent and peaceable Men in Oxford, as is to be seen in a forged Letter sent to Mr. Martin, the Town-Clerk, upon which some of the Militia-Troops came to suppress or prevent a Plot, made and laid by some more skilful in that Art, than the Reverend Persons named to be in it. [See Care's 2d Part of the History of the Popish Plot.]

Before the Act of Uniformity came out, twenty of the Auditors of two sober Ministers, who preached at Beeston-Church in Nottinghamshire, were indicted for a Conventicle.

Mr. Oliver Heywood, Minister of Coley, near Hallifax, was prosecuted in the Consistory at York, for not reading Common-Prayer, a whole Year before the Act of Uniformity commenced, and whilst his Majesty's Declaration granted an Indulgence; was suspended, June 29. 1662. and excommunicated. and could not by any Intercession be absolved by Dr. B. unless he would take an Oath, *parendo juri, & stando mandatis Ecclesie*. And going to hear Sermons at Hallifax, Dr. H. desired him to forbear, being an Excommunicate; and at Coley one made an Attempt to thrust him out of Church, for the same reason; and Twelve-pence a Sunday was demanded of him, for not coming to Church, during this Exclusion. And at length a Writ came out; but the Bayliff who was to serve it, favoured him so much as to smother it, and so he escaped the Prison.

Many that were strongly inclined to Unity and Peace, and forbore to conform as far as they could, in hopes of reforming some Things, and leaving Things most scrupled, at least indifferent, were urged by violent Persons

Persons with Conformity, before the new Law was made; and strange Informations and Reports were raised against worthy Men, and occasion taken from their scrupling some Things, to represent them as unpeaceable, and unfit for Union; and as if they were hatching new Mischiefs, which their Souls abhorred, stricter Laws must be made on purpose, not (as it proved) for the Publick Good, but private Turns.

We may not forget who were very forward in suppressing Lectures, and dissolving those Combinations which had for many Years preserved the Truths of God fresh in the Minds of Multitudes of People, which otherwise had been lost, or in danger; in unsettled Times, kept Ministers to their Studies, Love, and Acquaintance among them, and were managed without offence, or hindrance to our National Settlement. Some of the Suppressors were Gentlemen in Power, and meer Tools in other Mens hands, and these listened to false Reports of Whisperers and Tale-bearers; or else they were Persons of ungodly Lives, such as prosecuted Mr. *Parsons*, ignorant and debauched Persons, that served their Lusts.

Two such were Enemies to the Reverend Mr. *Barret* at *Nottingham*. One presented the Book of Common-Prayer to him, a Whoremonger, cast out of the Town-Council, leaving his own Wife to work for her Living, or shift as she could for her self, he took another Man's Wife away with him a great way off, and kept her several Years. Another Person, who was to testify that the Book was tendered to him, was an Attorney, who afterwards stirred an Adversary of the said Mr. *Barret* to put a forged Bond of 400 *l.* for Non-payment of 200 *l.* in Suit against him. And that Mr. *Barret* might not have Remedy in Chancery, he was presented in the spiritual Court, where it had soon come to an Excommunication, had he not removed out of the Diocese, into *Litchfield* Diocese. And that Attorney, when the Commissioners sate upon the matter of the Bond, feared to come out of Doors, being then in Debt, (tho a landed Man, and likely to have flourished in the World.)

These, and such as these, were the forward Men to bring good Men into Trouble, and were sooner heard than better Men, till they became discovered.

It is clear, that Nonconformity was not the only Cause of our Breaches and Miseries, but a Spirit of Division from God, and Disaffection to his Servants, and Peace with Godliness.

Mr. *Bennet*, of *Weitweek*, in *Leicestershire*, gives this Account under his hand, among many other Troubles: There came Letters from the Duke of *N. C.* relating a Plot in *Yorkshire*, to the Deputy-Lieutenants in *Leicestershire*, whereupon the Lord — and other Deputies, sent the Constable

to fetch Mr. B. before them, and told him, they conceived it necessary to secure him, as suspected of the Plot. He told them, His Lordship was ' the first Man he heard speak of the Plot, and being Treason, I must, said ' he, and I will reveal it; I know nothing but what I have from you, ' and I must make it known. His Lordship drew out Letters and Papers, which he said were from the D. of N. and other Lords, to shew him; but he said, he would see no Papers which did concern any Plot. The next day he went to the Earl of *Stamford*, and discovered what he heard from the Lord —, who discovered it to other Deputy-Lieutenants; and so Mr. *Bennet* escaped that Snare.

Upon such Informations (against the Ejected Party) it is like, the King and Council sent down Letters, to demand Security of the Peace from such Persons as they suspected: Upon which pretence, Mr. *Bennet* was, with other Ministers, taken, and clapt in Prison at *Leicester*; but they were after a Time released. Among whom was Dr. *Hen. Wilkinson*, of *Magdalen-Hall* in *Oxon*, a Person of that great Openness and Integrity of Heart, that no Man can believe him a Party in any ill Design: but when the rest were released, he was detained a while, upon pretence of keeping a Conventicle with his Fellow-Prisoners, to whom he preached one Lord's-Day in the Prison.

After the Act of Uniformity took place, it is impossible to relate the Number of their Sufferings, and great Trials, with Hardships upon their Persons, Estates, and Families, by uncomfortable Separations, Dispersions, Unsettlement and Removes, Disgraces, Reproaches, Imprisonments, chargeable Journeys, Expences in Law, tedious Sicknesses, and incurable Diseases, ending in Death; great Disquietments and Frights to their Wives and Families, and their doleful Effects upon them; and in all Conditions, various Appearances of Divine Providence, great Supports, various Deliverances, and strong Resolutions, with a clear satisfaction of Conscience, as to the Cause of their Sufferings, are impartially to be observed.

How various are the degrees of Light, and the Dictates of Conscience, even in good, wise, and self-searching Men, and that even in a division of Judgment and Practice! The first Cause is, different degrees of Light, and means of attaining Knowledge. Some are more deep and quick, searching and industrious, have better means and opportunities of knowing: some can take in a greater Latitude of Circumstances, and can compare Circumstances, and the Things themselves, and judg of the Good and Evil. I do not now take notice of the Biasses of Education, Prejudices, Prepossessions, and Passions of Men, nor the Influence of the World upon

Mens

Mens Alterations. And the true Reason of Resolution and Peace, which Men have in these different ways, is their Sincerity, and strict Observance of their own Light and Judgment, and the Purity of their Motives.

And from hence arises a Necessity of performing several Duties; such as, *Let us not judge one another, but forbear one another in Love.* Let us humbly acknowledg the Imperfection of our own Understandings. We have not all Knowledge; we know not other Mens Reasons, Thoughts, and Hearts: We should amicably confer when we meet, and hold our Candle to shew them the Way, when we think theirs is out; (this is to be understood of doubtful Things, and not clear Scripture Matters of Faith and Worship.) It should teach us Long-suffering, and to mortify our Passions, and tie up our Tongues and Hands from Persecution: Better my Hand be cut off, than that I stretch it out to strike any Man that is approved of God, for such Things wherein he approves himself unto him.

Let us take our Divisions to Heart, and think the Sufferings of our Brethren in this Life sufficient, and too much, and spare to condemn them to Hell, as Hypocrites, and evil Workers. There are some Conformists within my knowledg, that I am confident would never have conformed, unless they had thought it had been their Duty; and they have Peace therein: They were not drawn in by Preferments, nor driven in by Necessity.

There are and have been Nonconformists, that are as clear in their Nonconformity.

I was well acquainted with one, and I never was acquainted with a more loyal, sincere, holy Man. After many Disgraces, and sharp Trials, especially to a generous genteel Spirit, in *England*, he went beyond Sea, and in a terrible Storm at Sea, which broke into the Ship, he asked his own Soul, If he could die in and for that Cause of his Sufferings, and leaving his Native Country, to preach in a strange Land? His Conscience gave him a plain and full Answer, when ready, as he thought, to leave his Body and dear Relations in a deep Sea. After his Return, he told me this and other Passages, with a most sincere Profession, That he had nothing to do in this World but to serve Christ, nor any thing to seek but Christ; with whom I believe he is, and with him will appear, as one that shall judge the World.

Did that eminently learned and excellent Mr. *Joseph Allen*, in or after his many Imprisonments, terrible Convulsions, and daily Self-examinations, recoil from his Reasons for Nonconformity? He was certainly so clear and resolved in this, that in his last Conflict with the Devil, three hours before his Death, Satan did not attempt him there: but this is re-

membred of him, — *I care not to be longer in this (dirty) World, than either my Master hath doing or suffering-Work for me; were that done, farewell to Earth.* Pag. 90. of his Life.

It was thought he would conform, till he saw what Assent and Consent was required. Another worthy Person, Mr. *Joseph Baker* of Worcester, did read the Service, but went out, and on his Death-Bed said, He could have done any thing but sin.

Take a fourth Testimony, that able Scholar and Minister, Mr. *John Thompson*, on his Death-Bed, in a Chamber over a nasty Privy, (which was conceived to annoy him, into a Fever) in the Common-Goal at Bristol, told his Friends that were about him; *As for my Bonds, I bless God for them; and if I had known when I came in, that I should die here, I would have done no otherwise than I have done.*

Many more such Professions of Satisfaction might be gathered, but I must not be tedious. Neither were these the confident Sayings of fancyful Men, but rational. The first of these four debated the Case with one of the greatest Bishops in this Age; and was more satisfied in his Dissent, since he discoursed the Points. And the last offered to dispute the whole Case with the Bishop, and others that stood by, with this Caution, *Tolle Legem, & fiat Certamen*; which was most disingenuously construed by some of them thus, That he would have the Laws removed, and fight it over again; as it is in the Reply to the *Bristol Narrative*, printed, *Anno 1675.*

And no less preparation of Mind could carry them through all kinds of Afflictions and Sufferings, except Exile, and the Ax, or a more ignominious Death.

The Right Reverend Bishop of *Cork* can hardly believe the Brethren to be so poor as they are said to be. But can they chuse but be poor? If you consider their Number, their Charge, their small Time of enjoying their Livings, the small Number of the rich and wealthy that do own them, so far as to be their Patrons or Benefactors; the great Losses of their best Friends by the Fire of *London*, Decay of Trades; and, besides the long Taxes that lay upon them in common with others, many of them have been great Sufferers in their own Estates: Some Congregations having enough to do to afford a small Maintenance to their own Ministers; and having many occasions to exhaust them, to help them out of Prisons, to maintain them in Prisons, and many other ways constant Expence and Charge. Besides these Considerations, a few Arguments are convincing. I read in the Life of that Gentlewoman, of a great Mind and Contrivance, Mrs. *Baxter*, what his present Circumstances were, and what reduced him into them. How frugal and parsimonious that wise and good Man, Mr. *Jo. Corbet*, was, that he might have to communicate

to them that were in want! And the good Sums of Money which that great Example and Trustee of Charity, Mr. *Tho. Gouge*, hath given out of his own Purse, to some good Men in exigence; besides some private Collections, which have been made for some good Men, of deserved Note. Twenty or forty Pound is a good Collection; but alas! how little a way will it go! how soon spent in a Family! and such Collections must not come often about. The Reverend Mr. *B.* tells us, his Wife engaged to procure a Man of Note 20 *l.* but it fell so short, that she, to make good her charitable Undertaking, paid 12 *l.* out of her own Purse. These are next to Demonstrations. And I doubt not, but Mr. *Baxter* can name the Men, that live upon little more than brown Bread and Water. I have heard of some in *Cumberland*, that have but eight or ten Pounds *per an.* to keep a Family; so that a piece of Flesh hath not come to one of their Tables in six Weeks time; their Allowance could scarce afford them Bread and Cheese. One of them went to Plow six days, and preached the Lord's Day: And Mr. *O. W.* in the West Country, was forced to cut Tobacco for his Livelihood. Those Justices of Peace, that have for many Years been zealous in that part of their Office, know the Poverty of the Preachers, by their issuing out Warrants upon some of the Hearers, because of the Poverty of the Preachers. Out of respect to the Worth and Modesty of some of them, I forbear their Names.

Those two worthy Brethren, and Fellow-Labourers, Mr. *Reynolds*, and Mr. *Whitlock*, of *Nottingham*, in *Octob.* 1662. removed out of the Vicarage-House, where they and their Families lived together, as they have always done, and went to *Colwick-Hall*, which proved very unhealthful to most in both their Families; were (*Septemb.* 1663.) both seized at their Meeting, and brought to *Nottingham* by Souldiers, and with others indicted at the Assizes, where they came off, paying a small Fine. *August* 20. 1665. at seven of the Clock in the Morning, being Lord's Day, one of the Deputy-Lieutenants sent three Souldiers to seize them, who brought them to *Nottingham*, where, by an Order, (nothing being said to them) they were sent to the Marshal's, where they were detained Prisoners, no Charge given against them, nor ever called to appear, till *Octob.* 13. following, at which time they were by the D. Lieutenants set at Liberty, giving Bond to appear at six days warning, at any time before next Assizes; but they never heard more of them.

It was thought that Imprisonment (on the Five-Mile Act) was the Cause of a fifteen Weeks Sickness to Mr. *Reynolds*: Before he was recovered out of it, they were constrained to remove their Dwellings, *March* 25. 1666. and for three months were constrained to live from their

Families, before they could meet with a convenient Dwelling, which was fifteen or sixteen Miles distant from Nottingham. They preached in the Night, and early in the Morning, out of publick Time, and yet were indicted twice for Conventicles, were often disturbed; and once Mr. Reynolds was seized, the Officers breaking open the Door by force, who brought him before the Mayor, and would have indicted him upon the Five-Mile Act: But he was dismissed, making it to appear, he was upon his Journey to *Cambridg*.

Mr. *Joseph Truman*, (well known by several well-studied Treatises in Divinity) was often indicted, and once sued to an Outlawry, which was very chargeable to him.

A brief Narrative of the Sufferings and Imprisonment of Mr. Francis Bamfield, Minister of Sherburn in Dorsetshire.

The Town of *Sherburn*, by long and earnest Sollicitations, obtained Mr. *Bamfield* to succeed that loyal and reverend, very pious Divine, Mr. *Will. Leyford*, moved thereunto by the experience and knowledge of his Loyalty, (in a constant asserting the Royal Cause in all Changes, and suffering for it) as of his eminent Abilities. Being utterly unsatisfied in his Conscience with the Conditions of Conformity, he took his leave of his sorrowful and weeping Congregation, the Lord's Day before *St. Bartholomew*, 1662. In a short time after he removed to another House in Town, *Septemb. 19.* following. As he was, after his wonted manner, before he came to *Sherburn*, in Family-Duty, and Exercise upon *1 Thess. 5. 6. 7.* (whence he observed, That way which the Devil and his Instruments hinder Grace, God will wisely over-rule to further it,) and divers of his Neighbours with him, intent upon the Duty, one *S.* with other Souldiers, required him in the King's Name to be silent, and with the rest to depart the Room. This *S.* was neither of a sober nor bashful Temper, but squared for such a Service, yet could not utter his Command without much consternation, speaking a Word in a Breath.

Before this, two Deputy-Lieutenants had been consulted, to know if such an Exercise as Mr. *Bamfield* used were contrary to Law, but without any Answer from them, one *T.* an Apothecary, came with *S.* and said, he had a Warrant from the Deputy-Lieutenants, to serve upon Mr. *Bamfield*, and Mr. *Philips*, his Assistant, (a very worthy Preacher) and ten more of the chiefest of his Auditors then present, and thereupon took these two worthy Ministers, and above twenty five more, to Prison in the House of the Provost-Marshal, where they all continued Prisoners till Wednesday Night following, separating the Preachers from the People.

In this Prison, about twenty two of this Company, whereof one was very old, had but one Room to them all, and but one Bed in it, for five Days and Nights. But the Prisoners turned their Prison Chamber into a Chappel, and spent their Time like an holy Priesthood, in praying, repeating Sermons, and singing Psalms. Saturday, about seven or eight of the Clock, Leave being obtained, the Prisoners came together, (I suppose by that time they had more Rooms allowed them) and while one of them was in Prayer, the Souldiers brake into the Room, and spake aloud, calling him *Rogue*, and bidding him make an end ; laid hands upon him, and forced the rest of the Prisoners away.

On the Lord's Day, after one denial, Mr. *Bamfield* had leave to preach to the Prisoners. Many of the Town desired to be present, and some obtained leave of the Souldiers, (paying a Fee of Entrance) to go in, but were thrust out again after they had paid their Money. Some got into a Backside, and heard, and were threatned with Writs for the Trespas, by the Owner of it, whose Wife gave them leave ; and Satisfaction of ten times the value was offered him for the Trespas.

One Evening the Souldiers would needs shew some Devotion, and when he that read the Service, came to *Lighten our Darknes*, one of them, thinking it had been a Psalm set up a Tune to sing : So unskilful were these Men in the Form of their own Devotion, being better at hindring others, than performing themselves the Worship of God.

The Lord's Day at Night, the Ministers and Prisoners had leave to come together, and Mr. *Philips* to preach ; but whilst he was in Prayer before Sermon, the Souldiers came violently in, and took away his Chair, and disturbed the Exercise ; and so they had no Sermon.

Upon Wednesday following, four or five of the Deputy-Lieutenants met, and called Mr. *Bamfield* before them first, then Mr. *Philips*, and afterwards the rest of the Prisoners. Sir J. S. of *Par.* was in the Chair, (who could come into Contest with Mr. *Bamfield* in point of Loyalty, in trying Times, it seems.) Mr. *Bamfield* owned he was worshipping God in his Family, his Doors open, and that divers of his Neighbours came in. Many were the Mischiefs imputed to their hearing and withdrawing, tho not one thing was charged to be in the Prayer or Preaching, tending to Sedition, or otherwise peccant ; however, cause or no cause, the Chairman declared the Exercise did tend to Sedition, and required Sureties for the Good-Behaviour, and Appearance at the next Assizes, which he did : And the same was required, and given by Mr. *Philips*, and the rest of the Prisoners.

While they were in Prison, divers that brought Provisions for their Friends, were not permitted: Some who came to visit their Friends in Prison, were imprisoned with them: Some had the Provisions taken from them, and the Souldiers made merry with it. Some were fain to carry Meat in their Hat-Crowns, that it might not be seen. Some were violently handled and kicked down Stairs.

Some of the Prisoners had been Souldiers for the King in the Wars. A Thousand Pounds Security was offered for one of them, who had been a Souldier for the King, that he might go home to his Wife, who lay in at his House, a little way from the Marshal's House. The Sister of another, (a Souldier for the King in the Wars) was violently used; and the Victuals carried for her Brother, was taken from her.

The Prisoners paid double Fees, to the Justices Clerks for Recognizances, and to the Provost-Marshal, the same Gentlemen being both Deputy-Lieutenants and Justices: They paid for the Souldiers Attendance to guard them; that is, to disturb them, and abuse their Friends, as you heard before.

Mr. *Joshua Kirby*, Preacher of the Lecture at *Wakefield*, founded by the Lady *Cambden*, (90 l. per an.) settled there by the Company of Mercers, *London*, was ejected, 1662. but continued preaching in his own House, on the Lecture-Day, till a Lecturer was settled in publick. After the Lecture was supplied, he was wont to preach in his own House on the Lord's Day Evening, after his hearing in the Parish-Church, except when he was hindred, to avoid Warrants, and Writs, *De Excommun. cap.* or Imprisonment. In the latter end of 1665, he was forced by the Five-Mile Act to leave his House and Family, and travel abroad, to his great Inconvenience and Trouble, and of his Family, till he took a License from his Majesty to preach, 1672.

He was once committed for Neglect, Contempts, rebellious and insolent Disobedience to the Laws, (in preaching in his own House, which is not contrary to that Act of Uniformity, upon which they proceeded with him.) for three Months, *Novemb. 21. 1662*, by five Justices of the Peace. But to avoid this, he travelled abroad, till the *Mittimus* was out of date. *Feb. 20. following, 1662*, another *Mittimus* is made, to carry him to the Common-Goal at *York*, during three Months. He was taken, and sent accordingly, and remained a close Prisoner, never going out of the said Goal, paying 10 s. a Week for Chamber and Diet, as the Goaler testified.

August 26. 1664, after the Conventicle-Act came out, being the Lord's Day, as he was coming from Church, he was taken by the Bayliff of *Wakefield*, and was not permitted to go to Church in the Afternoon; and after two or three Nights stay at his House, was again sent to the Goal in *York-Castle*, for three Months.

After his coming home from *York*, other Warrants were prepared for him, in which are these Words:

'Whereas, &c. divers Sectaries, and disloyal Persons, as we are informed, to the Terror of the King's Liege People, do notoriously, *impudently*, and seditiously meet in the House of the said *J. K.* a Schismatical Nonconformist, under colour and pretence of Religious Exercise, in other manner than is *allowed* by the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England*. — The said *J. K.* doth traduce and revile the King, and the Church, — disturb the Peace, and turmoil the Nation in new Combuellions and Confusions, &c. —

This Mr. *Jos. Kirby* did constantly frequent the Church, whilst he was permitted, preached with least Offence, and avoided all appearance of Opposition; and, in the Time of the Usurpation, was a constant and loyal Assertor of the Royal Interest, insomuch that he suffered for his Forwardness therein: But Preaching in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy and Practice, (what are those kinds of Religious Exercise, that are *disallowed* by the Liturgy?) is a Crime, that hath Blackness enough in it to deface his Loyalty.

It is remarkable, he was sent by another *Mittimus* to Goal to *York-Castle*; but they who made it, were so exact and careful as to mis-date it, and to make the Time of going in, to be the Time of his coming out; and the Goaler observing it, refused to receive him, and so he escaped that time. But the Constable that went with him, with that wise *Mittimus*, was so civil and courteous to him, that he desired him, that he would be pleased to take his Lodging there, till he should go back to *Wakefield* for another *Mittimus*. What an officious Officer was this, to be willing to take the pains to fetch another *Mittimus*, asking nothing of Mr. *Kirby*, but to bear his Charges! I am much taken with the Kindness of this honest Constable, that would save Mr. *Kirby* a Journey himself, to fetch a better *Mittimus*.

To send Ministers to the Common-Goal, is not much to their Honour; but to send any to the House of Correction, is to send them whither Gentlemen are seldom sent, I think. But to shew how Nonconformists have been honoured, I shall produce a Piece of a Copy of a *Mittimus*, made to send a Minister to the House of Correction, I will conceal his Name, except I had his Leave, in honour to him.

Burgus de Leeds.

To the Master of the House of Correction.

WE herewithall send you the Body of — who stands accused before us, for that he and others, above the Number of five Persons, and above the Age of sixteen Years, did depart from the Places of their several Habitations, and upon Jan. 21. instant, in the Night-time Assemble, under pretence of joining in Religious Worship. — And refusing to give their Recognizances, with Sureties, to answer the Premises, and to be of Good-Behaviour. — These are therefore to will and command you, That the Body of — you receive, and him in your safe Custody keep, until he shall enter into Recognizance, &c. till the next General Sessions, &c.

Here was indeed a Warrant (such as it was.) But another Minister, (whose Name I conceal, to avoid Offence, and for Shame) was at Noon-day, by oral Command of a L. put in the Town-Stocks, in his own Parish, to the great Grief and Trouble of his People, (whose Minister he had been thirteen Years, elected by them, and presented by the lawful Patron to his Living) where he continued for the space of two Hours.

Anno 1669. Mr. O. Heywood, Minister of Coley, near Hallifax, was desired to preach near Leeds, on those Words, *Walk worthy of God.* But the Mayor of Leeds, (whose Name I will not publish, because he repented of his Rashness and Incivility) hearing of it, sent Officers to disturb the Meeting, who did it effectually, with rudeness, who brought him to the Mayor, who treated him like a Fury, holding up his hand as tho he would strike him, and speaking Language unfit from a Magistrate to a Minister, and threatening to prosecute him to the uttermost, saying, *Have not you been once in our Hands already?* No, Sir, (said Mr. H.) I never was in Prison, but once for the King, in Sir George Booth's Rising. *The more shame for you now,* quoth Mr. Mayor, *cannot you reade, Fear God, and honour the King?* In short, he was carried away with Lanthorns to the Common-Goal, called Capen-Hall, and there put into a Room like a Swine-Sty, having nothing in it but Heaps of Straw. But the Goaler was so civil, as to have his Lodging cleansed, and fresh Straw brought for him, and to suffer a Bed to be brought in for him by his Friends; and leaving him some Conveniences, but disarming him of his Knife, he

courteously

courteously left him to his Rest, which was disturbed by Dogs and Cats fighting in the Room below him, &c. Next day Mr. Mayor sent for him, would have had him given Bond for the Behaviour, and fell into another perplexity, distracted between his own Spirit, and the Spirit of them that made him their Instrument, saying, What shall I do? I am put in this place; I would do for the best, and would willingly dismiss Mr. H. but I fear I shall be called into question for it, and brought into danger for it. But some wise Men and Friends promised to interpose between him and Danger, and so he became exceeding courteous to Mr. H. freely dismissed him, telling him it was pity the Church should lose his Gifts, and other kind Discourse. — But he and thirty six were fined at the next Sessions, and himself put into the Ecclesiastical Court for the same Fault.

Mr. R. Smith, Minister of *Wvb. S. in Somerset*, to which he had a legal Title, was forced out by the Violence and Power of a Popish Family; in *April, 1662*, (before the Act of Uniformity came out); Thence he removed to *Dynnington*, where he had some Estate of his own; whence he was constrained, for Peace and Quietness, to remove to *Chard*, to be out of the way of one who had informed, that he had been inciting the People to Rebellion, when in truth he was two days abroad, as a Physician to divers Families, and the Forger of the Information let it fall. When the *Oxford Act* came out, in his Circumstances he could remove no whither but to his Estate at *Dynnington*, where he had not been many Months, but his former Enemy, and some Confederates, wrought him great Troubles, of which one was a Prosecution in the Ecclesiastical Court at *Wells*. He was a fourth time constrained to remove, and not only to leave, but to sell his Estate, and to avoid Troubles, to remove into the remote Parts of *Devon*.

Mr. Fox, Rector of *D. B. in Staffordshire*, after *August 24.* was put upon a new Way to maintain his Wife, and five small Children; and upon the Advice of Friends, he was encouraged to settle in a Corporation near to him, whereby his Pen, and help of Relations, he had a comfortable Livelihood, until the *Oxford Act*, which forced him to remove, and to rent a Farm in *Derbyshire*.

Mr. Chantry, Minister of *Wveeford* in the same County, was necessitated, by the same Act of Corporations, to remove with his Wife and four Children into another Country, to take a Farm upon a Rack-Rent. His Family increasing, he could not afford to keep either Man or Maid, but was forced

to labour hard, and fare hard, and with Labour and Thrift could not pay his Rent, but ran in Debt, to his great Trouble and Affliction, yet lives upon it still, having eight Children.

Mr. Maynard, an aged Minister, of North-Taunton in Devon, was carried before one Justice G. (without any respect to Age or Episcopal Ordination.) Mr. Maynard was threatned to be sent to the Work-House where (said the Justice) you shall hear better preaching; and further, *You, Maynard, who made you a Preacher?* He replied, he was of old, Episcopally ordained: To whom the Justice answeren, *I hear you teach Children to suck in Rebellion; you ought to be banished the Realm, and if you return, to be cut asunder.*

This same Justice is suspected to be Popish, by his Words at Cholmleigh, at a Privy-Sessions, declaring, *The Nonconformists deserved to be executed, as well, if not better, than the Traiterous Jesuits that were executed at Tyburn.*

Two Ministers licensed by the King, were informed against for preaching in Licensed Places, and were brought before the Justice at the Bell in Cholmleigh, who adjourned to the Church-Yard, where he charged them with the Breach of the Statute of 22 of Car. 2. The Ministers pleaded, there was no Proof, that the Religious Exercises were in o her manner than according to the Liturgy: It is no matter, said he, for the Law forbids the assembling of more than the Family. They pleaded their Licences from the Secretary of State. After about two hours pleading in the open Air, to the hazard of their Healths, (bare-headed, 'tis supposed) he fined the Preachers 20 l. apiece, the House 40 l. for two Meetings; and said to one of the Preachers, pleading the King's Declaration, *What do you tell me of a whimsical Declaration?* And the other Preacher rendering him his License, he refused to look upon it, and said, *It may be an old Almanack for any thing I know.*

Mr. Henry Root, Minister at Sowerby, near Hallifax, was forcibly taken out of his own House, 1663; by virtue of a *Mittimus*, upon a *Significavit* by three Bayliffs, who broke the inner Door of a Room where he was; hurrying him faster than his Old Age could bear, nor suffering him to take as much as a Coat, nor a Staff, nor Money in his Purse, nor to receive the Salutations of his Daughter-in-Law, who ran into the way to meet him, nor to ride upon a Horse, which another Reverend Minister that rode, and overtook him on foot, lent him to ride upon, without leading the Horse by the Bridle; So he alighted, and went on foot to Hallifax, and thence to York-Castle; Prisoner for three Months. After a time, he was again sent Prisoner to the same Place for six Months; but the Justices under-
standing

standing that the Commitment was contrary to Law, he was at three Months end discharged. Yet a third time he was sent to *York Castle*, by Sir *J. A.* shewing no Cause, till further Order, where he continued Prisoner, close shut up in a little Room, and not so much as his Wife permitted to come to him, no, not so near him as into the Castle, to know if he were sick or well, alive or dead, till his Son by some means procured Liberty for his Mother to see his Father, but was not permitted to take part of his Lodging with him: And at length a Favour was procured for him, to be removed out of the Castle into the City. Between both Places he continued near a whole Year. Here's a long Imprisonment; but you shall hear of more Troubles upon his Son.

Mr. *Timothy Root*, Minister of *Sowerby-Bridg Chappel*, in *York-shire*, for preaching after *August 24. 1662*, till he was satisfied to conform, or the Congregation provided for, was by Sir *J. A.* and Mr. *C.* sent to *York Castle*, (his Wife lying in of her first Child) for three Months. In 1666, he was sent to Goal again, for no matter of Fact, till further Order. At which time the D. of *X.* came to *York*, and it was said, he would discharge him, and many others; but he did not. Shortly after the Duke of *Buckingham* came to *York*, and finding no matter of Fact against any of them, discharged them, upon Bond for the Good-Behaviour.

When the Five-Mile Act came forth, Mr. *Root* was forced to leave his Habitation and Family, and Farm which he had taken, to his great Loss, and his Wife ready to lie in, and to abide at his Father-in-Law's, whither also his Wife and Family came, when she could go abroad, and there continued, till going to *Lancashire*, to visit some Relations, he was indicted by a Doctor, who disturb'd him as he was preaching in a Chappel, upon the desire of his Friends: But the Doctor mistook his Name, and so he escaped. And the Persons indicted with him did traverse the Indictment, and coming before Judge *Littleton* at *Lancaster*, the Judge worthily declared, *If we made publick Places, where the Bell was tolled, to be riotous Assemblies, they would presently cause all People to turn Papists.* Some five Months after Mr. *R.* was invited to preach at the same Chappel, being vacant, for which he was indicted again for a Riot, which proved chargeable to him. *August 1670.* he was desired by some Friends at *Leeds*, to preach at *Shadwell Chappel* one Lord's Day, the Place being destitute. Whilst the Congregation was singing a Psalm, came the Lord S. of H. Mr. *C. &c.* and twenty four Troopers, with some Bayliffs; he was drawn out of the Pulpit, into the Chappel-Yard, where he was afraid of his Life, because of the trampling of their Horses, (and now also his Wife lay in of a fourth Child.) He cried to them to keep off their Horses; he was in their

hands, and they in God's: *In God's hands*, said the Lord, *no, thou art in the Devil's hands.* His Pockets were searched, and a Receipt was found, which had his Name in it; which he confessing, they make a *Mittimus*, to carry him to *Tork* Goal, where he was kept up close Prisoner in a Chamber, whither the Under-Goaler came, and told him, Except he would give them 20*l.* he should be loaden with double Irons, and cast into the Low Goal, among the Thieves. He put them off as well as he could without Money; but after fourteen Days Confinement to his Chamber, he was brought forth, and double Irons were laid upon him, heavier than any of the Thieves, whose Co-prisoner he was like to be. The Goaler locked the inner Door in the Day-time, and would not permit him the Liberty of the Thieves, to walk in the Castle-Yard, to take the Air; nor a Bed-stead to be set up, but he laid a Bed, which he got, upon Straw. On the Lord's Day following he would have preached to the Thieves, and other Prisoners, standing only at the Holes where the Prisoners begged: But whilst he was at Prayer, the Under-Goaler came with a Command from the Head-Goaler, for him to desist. But when he had thus lain about four or five Days and Nights; two Justices in the West, Capt. B. and Mr. T. sent a Certificate for him to Mr. C. upon which he was released, yet not without being bound to appear at the next Assizes at *Tork*; where waiting all the Time of the Assizes and nothing coming in against him, he was finally discharged from that Trouble, which was very chargeable to his Purse, hazardous to his Wife, vexatious to his Friends, and ignominious in a high degree. He was four times indicted in several Places, and put to very great Charges of Journeys, Traverses, *Certiorari's*, Fees, and Removes: He was thrice thrown into the Common-Goal at *Tork*, and once laid in double Irons, close shut up; not favoured to lie like a Man upon a borrowed Bed; not permitted on a Lord's Day to preach to the Prisoners: And all this for preaching, neither Sedition nor Heresy, upon Invitation, and where there was great need.

Mr. *Nathan Heywood*, of *Ormskirk* in the County of *Lancaster*, was wont to go frequently to hear the Service on the Week-Days; and for all that, a strict Command was sent to him, (by Warrant sent to the Churchwarden) and to two Gentlemen, both Protestants, and to them alone, to come to Church-Service, or else they should be proceeded against upon the Acts of Q. *Eliz.* and K. *James.* He pleaded, that he had the King's Licence to preach at Chappels. The Justice not satisfied with this, sent out his Warrants for Twelve-pence a Sunday, altho he saw Mr. *Heywood* present at Common-Prayer, upon occasion of a Funeral. The next day after he recalled his Warrants, turning it into Jest, as if he intended only
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the Quakers, but blotted out the Names of two notable Papists, presented to him.

Jan. 4. 1673, the Justice himself intended to break up the Assembly at *Scarsbrick* Chappel, but was discovered, being crossed and hindred in his coming, by notable Providences, and being discovered, Mr. *H.* forbore Preaching. When the Justice came, finding himself disappointed, he was in a great Rage, and drove the People out of the Chappel Yard and Chappel, and bad them depart; and in his way home again, he called upon a Constable (a Papist) charging him to go to the Chappel, and keep possession off it till four of the Clock; which the Constable did, taking other Papists to his Help, who all made merry in the Chappel, and smoaked Tobacco, and kept out Protestants from the Worship of God.

Jan. 27. The Justice, in a Letter to a great Lady, whose Chappel it was, declared, that he intended to have been there himself, hearing the Liturgy would be read there; but being indisposed, he could not come, desiring her to do her self the Honour to break up the Meeting which was to be there: But she thought it a greater Honour to encourage Mr. *H.* to preach, and the People to hear. His Servant staid Sermon, as well as Service, and told his Master what was done, according to his Command; and said, to his displeasure, he never heard a better Sermon, and desired him to send him thither as often as he pleased.

A Lawyer, and a Parliament-Man, advised the Lady to have the Liturgy read in her Chappel, and the Justice could not touch them: Which was done, and for all that he sent out Warrants to levy the Fine upon the Hearers, and sent several times Officers to take Names; and *March 8.* sent a Threatning to Mr. *Heywood*, he would come and pull him out of the Pulpit by the Ears; and sent a Warrant to distrain Forty Pounds upon his Goods, for a second Offence. Mr. *H.* was appoined to meet the Justice at *Leverpool*, but instead of a good Understanding, he grossly abused him, threatned to send him to Prison on the Five-Mile Act, and said openly, *The King had no Power to grant Licences to preach.* *March 29.* an Usher of *Holland* read Prayers that day, and soon after he began, the Constable and Overseers of *Scarsbrick* came to the Desk, clapt a Warrant on his Shoulder, and charged him to go with them to Justice *E.* who threatned him with a Prison, and under-hand bad him go home. The Justice continued to give d sturbance to Mr. *H.* almost every Day, till *December* following; and upon *Decemb. 19.* sent out his Warrant upon the Five-Mile Act, because he dwelt within three Miles of *Ormskirk*, where he had been Minister. And on the Lord's Day, *Decemb. 20.* there came three Men (such as they were) from Sir *R. B.* and him, about eleven of the Clock, while Mr. *H.* was in his Prayer before Sermon, walking up and
down

down while Prayer was ended; then *Rigby*, one of them, came up to the Pulpit, and said, *Sir, you are our Prisoner, come down, and go along with us.* Mr. *H.* desired them to forbear till he had preached, and then he would submit; but *Rigby* held his Pistol to Mr. *H.*'s

This is the Common-Prayer of these kind of Reformers, used more than the Liturgy.

Head, and said, *God-damn-me, come down, Sirrah or I will crack your Pate.* Mr. *H.* desired him to be more civil; such Language was unfit for that Place. Then the Lady, who with her Children

and Servants stood at the Pulpit-door, required him to shew his Warrant, and told him, She might keep a Chaplain; and if he had no Authority but Guns, she had Guns in the House too. He shewed a written Warrant, which was obeyed: And the next day, the old Lady *Stanley*, and two Deputy-Lieutenants, and several Gentlemen, came and appeared for Mr. *H.* His living within three Miles of his former Place, and preaching, being a Nonconformist, were urged against him: He defended himself with Argument, and it could not be proved, that he lived within three Miles: But the Thing insisted upon was, That he should promise to preach no more. Several Jurices stood for him; and one told his Prosecutors, If Mr. *H.* were sent to *Lancaster-Goal*, he should be as comfortably maintained, and as honourably released, as ever Prisoner was. At which the Prosecutor went off the Bench in a Rage, and went home, and sent his Warrants to distrain for Twenty Pounds upon his Goods: The Doors were kept shut for half a Year, and the Officers were often chidden, (who alledged they had no Power to break open Doors) because they did not get in, when they saw his Children playing in the Streets daily. His Person was kept from Goal, and his Goods from Distress, but his Spirit could not be preserved from great Grief; for he was heard to say, a little before he died, *I think this turning out of our Licensed Places will cost Mr. Yates and me our Lives. O this goes heavily! Our casting out of our great Places, was not so much as casting us out of our little Places.*

I leave the considering Reader to his Observations, which are obvious; only we plainly see, to what use the Laws are applied, and by whom executed.

Here, as before, is to be seen the Irreverence which some Men expressed towards his Majesty's Power and Declaration; and to them I will add one more Instance of it: And because it was so notorious, as to be brought before the King and Council, I need not be so shy to relate it, neither do I produce it as an Evidence of Disloyalty to the King, which I will not impeach, nor of Zeal for the Laws, as of an Antipathy against some religious Things and Persons.

Mr. Sam. Doughty had the King's License to preach in his own House, in *Ashby-de-la-Zouch*, was convicted by the Lord B. and Lord S. Forty Pounds were levied upon him, twenty Pounds for his House, and twenty Pounds for preaching in it. He made his Appeal to the Quarter-Sessions, pleaded his License from the King, that there was neither Sedition, nor Breach of Peace; but he found no Relief. Afterwards he complained to the King and Council; the Lords were sent for up to Council: The King was graciously pleased to give him his part, but he could never get it.

The Losses by Nonconformity were very great, as being the Loss of a settled Subsistence; but the Loss by the Five-Mile Act was far greater, in many respects, to the poor ejected Ministers, and their Families.

Mr. John Mott, Minister of *Kings-Bromley*, near *Litchfield*, was separated from his People, from whom good Preferment, with the Urgency of Friends, could not allure him. After *St. Bartholomew*, he took a Farm of Sixty Pounds *per an.* in the said Parish, on which he lived handsomely four Years, and was a good Tenant. But behold what a Crime it is to be a Nonconformist! He was threatned, and sued by a Gentleman in the Parish and one of his Landlords turned against him, saying, It was not fit a Rebel against the King should live so near the Church: And another of them, or the same, after he had made him a Promise to sell him a Lease for sixteen Years, as soon as he returned from *London*; at *London* let the Estate to another, at the very same Rent, only he had a Watch in Earnest of the Bargain; which Bargain stood, and the new Tenant turned out Mr. Mott, and his Family, to his great Loss, and at once was forced to leave the Place where his Relations lived, himself was born, and had been a painful Minister. After this, he was accommodated with a part of his Wife's Mother's House in *Stafford*, where he lived in a very afflicted, troublesome Condition, frowned upon by the Magistrates, (regulated Magistrates could do no less) threatning him with a Prison, (for the bold Offence of living in a Corporation, when he could live no-where else.) When his Wife was big with Child, (of her sixth) he was committed to the Marshal's hand, because he would not give in Bond, wherein he was required to renounce the Covenant, (no doubt that Bond was drawn by the Advice of Counsel learned in the Law, or rather did not the Arbitrary Spirit act in those Counsels?) and further threatned to be sent to *Tisbury* Castle, to be safe there. But he was at about a Fortnight's end discharged, when Reason and good Nature advised together, only paying his Fees, and the Charges of the House. After this, the Corporation-Act came out; and what Malice without Law could not do before, this Law

Law gratified the Malice of them, that thought a Corporation could not be safe, whilst one Nonconformist was in it. He was then forced from his Wife and Children, came to them sometimes privately; and if for many Years he appeared openly, Information was presently given to the Magistrates, and he brought before the Mayor, and commanded to be gone, or stay in Prison. Once he was brought before the Deputy-Lieutenants; some told him (strange News) that he was in a Plot; but he was dismissed, upon his Promise of Appearance whenever required. So vigilant was the Eyes of some upon him, or severe was their Inspection, that he hardly durst attend the Funeral of his own Child, or stay to comfort his Wife under her Motherly Grief, occasioned by that Loss. These Troubles, and Cessation from his former Work and Business, did affect him into a Decay of Health, and Oppression of Spirits, that it hastned his Death, as is verily believed.

Mr. *Tho. Bakewell*, Rector of *Rolleston*, and afterwards Lecturer of *Burton* upon *Trent*, in the County of *Stafford*, was suspended by *B. H.* for preaching in his own House, and was taken by a Warrant, together with Mr. *Ford*, (an eminent Minister, as he is said to be) his then Auditor, and brought before Sir ——— who demanded Sureties for the Behaviour. Mr. *B.* asked, if Preaching was a Breach of the Behaviour? The Justice said, It was: Then said they both, We will give no Bond against Preaching. Upon which they were imprisoned ten Weeks, and released without any Imposition (of Bonds or Security.)

After the *Oxford Act*, he left his Wife and Family at *Burton*, and kept away for many Months, till he saw the Edg of his Adversaries abate, preaching and shifting from House to House. When the King's Declaration came out, he was invited to preach eight Miles off; and to keep himself from the Officers, that had Warrants against him and the People, they congregated in Lanes, and woody Places: But the Huntsmen sent their Dogs after them, from place to place, and took Names, and informed, and Distresses were made, for Persons, but not for the Common on which they met, not being known to be in any Parish.

It is observed, That all one Summer, which was wet, they were not wet with Rain, while they met, inasmuch that the Country-People said, They can have fair Weather to keep their Conventicles, when others could not get fair Weather to get in their Harvest. He was confined to his own House, as a Prisoner, not daring to go forth without great circumspection, for some Years; and by strange Providences, like *Athanasius*, escaped great Dangers, and narrow Searches.

Mr. *Tho. Jollie*, Minister of *Altham*, upon his Ejection, broke up House, and with three small Children, was put to wander for a considerable time, without any certain Dwelling-Place. When he was a Sojourner at *Healy*, *Octob* 9. 1663, he was seized upon by a Lieutenant, and three Souldiers, in a rude manner, was set on Horseback behind one of them, not permitted to draw on his Boots, nor put on his Hat: These carried him to *Burnley*, and committed him to a Guard. He was examined about keeping Meetings, which could not be proved; but yet he must find Sureties for the Behaviour: and, as if that was too little, he must be sent out of his Country. When he was at Family-Duty, in a House to which he was committed by a Colonel, a Captain came in boisterously, pretending it was a Conventicle, and with some Words of Blasphemy, plucked the Bible out of his hand, and drew him to the Court of Guard, where he must sit all Night, insulted over, and was not suffered to lie down till towards Day, when he was permitted to lie on a little moist Straw. He was, contrary to the Order of a Justice of Peace, and without the Command of the Colonel, sent away on the Lord's Day, in extreme Rain, to *Skippon* in *York-shire*, and there lay under the Marshal's hand, till sent back, because the Officers there knew not to what purpose, or for what Cause he was committed.

Novemb. 4. 1663. he was taken Prisoner by three Troopers, not shewing him any Warrant or Order, and not telling him whither they would have him, but carried him to *York*, and put him under the Marshal's hand, who lodged him in a cold Room, without Fire, in the depth of Winter; and no Crime objected to him there: after a great Expence, and Hazard of his Life, he was sent home in Peace.

Feb. 12. 1664, he was taken at a Meeting by the same Captain; his Souldiers brake down the Doors by his Command. When the Captain came in among them, his Courage failed him, and his Countenance fell; so that he went away, and left Mr. *J.* to his Souldiers, one of whom (*W.*) raged against him in vile and bloody Expressions: Soon after which, he, and another Souldier were taken away by Death, in a terrible manner. He and others were carried before two Justices, who sent him to *Lancaster* Goal, where he continued the full Time appointed by the first Act against Conventicles.

After his Release, he was again (*Novemb*. 23. 1665.) seized, by Order from the Lord Lieutenant and Deputies, and by them turned over to the Justices, to give Bond for the Behavior, or to be sent to Goal; but Justice *Rigby* confessed it was without Precedent, and therefore sent him home, upon promise to surrender himself, if he sent for him within a Fortnight.

After the Five-Mile Act came out, he was separated from his Friends, and forced to leave his own Estate, and put to continual Night-Travels, to enjoy Divine Ordinances, for many Years, by which he contracted Diseases, to the danger of his Life. Being upon a time taken Preaching, for which a Warrant of Banishment, for the third Offence, was sent out against him ; but it miscarried, and he escaped.

April 25. 1669, he was taken by Captain — and his Man, who brought him before some Deputy-Lieutenants, who sent him to *Lancaster Goal* for six Months, for preaching within five Miles of *Altham*, where he had been Minister.

In *October*, he was sued for Forty Pound, upon the Five-Mile Act, by the said Captain N. which Suit cost Mr. J. about Eighty Pounds.

Decemb. 5. following, a Warrant of the Behaviour was served upon Mr. J. for (as he saith) fulfilling his Ministry, in feeding his Flock, according to his solemn Vow made at his Ordination.

About *June 14. 1674*, before he knew his License from the King was out, he was taken preaching in one of his licensed Places, by Captain N. who commanded him to come down, or he would pistol him, (holding his Pistol at him in the Pulpit) and swearing blasphemously, and calling him shamefully. After the Captain had detained him as a Prisoner, (being made a Justice) he sent forth a Warrant to distrain Twenty Pounds upon Mr. J.'s Goods ; and because his Goods were removed out of the way, he sent out two Warrants, to distrain upon two of his Hearers ; which Goods of theirs Mr. J. redeemed, because taken instead of his. Another Warrant was sent out for Twenty Pounds for the House. The whole of the Fines for that Meeting came to about Forty four Pounds, which was all imbezelled; without paying to the King his part, or giving to the Poor theirs, save only one Forty Shillings. The King did graciously remit to the Sufferers his part ; but the Captain would not obey the Order of the Lord Treasurer: Yet this is for the King. The same is known to be true of a Justice in *Lancashire*.

About *Novemb. 7. 1678*. Mr. J. with several other Dissenting Protestants, were presented among the Plotting Papists: They made their Appearance, and desired their Business might be put off till the next Sessions, which the Justice granted, because the Parliament had the Case of Dissenters before them: Yet the Clerk of the Peace returned him and the rest into the Exchequer, thereby (as he saith) cheating them out of their Liberty of Traverse. This was chargeable to him, besides the Sequestration of two parts of his Estate, which he looked for, when he wrote the short Narrative of his great Sufferings.

N. B. Some have exposed some of the Nonconformists to Jealousy and Sufferings, as being confederate with Jesuits, or maintaining a Correspondency and Interest with them; but this Nonconformist found no such Friendship from that Party: For Mr. *W.* of *Drusenbaugh*, a great Papist in his Parish, charged his Steward, a Papist also, to shut him out of *Lango Chappel*, where he was Lord of the Soil. His Adversaries were great Intimates with the Popish Gentry, which are numerous in that County; and some of his Adversaries had been professed Papists a while before.

There are many very remarkable Instances of God's Providence towards him, and of the insatiable Malice of very ill Men against him; with the Divine Hand stretched out against several of his Persecutors.

Two Captains, Gentlemen, and an Ensign hindered him to preach, or commend his People to God, before *August 24. 1662.* after thirteen Years labouring among his People. He withdrew, and gave way to their Violence, leaving this Admonition with one of the Gentlemen: *This is not the way to turn the Wrath of God from your House, which hath long lain upon it, but to bring it on to the uttermost.* The Gentleman answered, *Be it so.*

Their Carriage towards Mr. *Jollie* was an Offence and great Grief to the Country.

One of the three Excluders of him died in the pursuit of his most debauched Practices, with unexpressible Horrors.

Soon after another of them, whom he had warned as before, died (having seen his Male Issue rooted out before) by his own hands, by a Relapse into excessive Drinking, after a little Recovery. His Disease apprehended him, as if he had been struck with a Rod upon his Arm.

Another (but not one of the three) violent Prosecutor died in great Poverty and Disgrace.

A younger Brother, and next Heir to the admonished Gentleman, was the Cause of Mr. *J.*'s Apprehension, *April 25. 1669.* who not being well, would needs have his Chamber-Window in *A. H.* opened to see Mr. *J.* carried by a Prisoner; but such an Air came in at the Window upon him, that he took cold, and soon after died, without any male Issue: And saith the good Man, *Lord grant the third Brother may take warning.*

Another Gentleman, that sent Mr. *J.* Prisoner to *Lancaster*, was shortly after made a Prisoner, and all his Estate in *Lancaster* seized upon for Debt.

One *F.* a Retainer to Capt. *N.* and an Instrument in the Prosecution, a drunken and debauched Fellow, after a Revelling-Bout at the *Ab.* in *W.* was taken or smitten with an insatiable Thirst, insomuch that two days after he lay down and drunk at the River, to quench his Thirst, upon which a Stitch took him, and killed him presently.

About the latter end of 1677, Mr. R. a Justice, met at a Privy-Sessions, at which one of the Justices asked, Who Mr. J. was? Another answered, He is a Minister: No, said Mr. R. *he is an Enemy of Christ, and a Traitor to the King.* Presently after (as some present are ready to testify) that Gentleman fell a trembling, could not hold his Pen to sign any Warrant, nor sit up, nor stay in the Place, but was necessitated to leave the Sessions, and never came more to the Bench, dying soon after, as a fearful Spectacle.

The same worthy Person concludes a short Sum of his Sufferings thus; *We might give an Account of the special band of God upon us for Good, all along, throughout all our Infirmities and Temptations, leading us by the hand, and upholding us, either signally saving us from, or strengthening us under our Troubles, filling us with Peace passing understanding, and Joy unspeakable, supplying our Wants every way, who are a very weak and poor People. — Yea, either convincing or changing our Adversaries, or baffling and blasting their Designs. — All this for the everlasting Honour of his most glorious Name alone. Hallelujah.*

Compare the Spirit of the Prosecutors, and the Spirit of the Sufferers, the End of the one, and of the other, and then judg seriously, who is the best Christian, and who is most approved of Christ, they who serve him, or the other who trouble them for it.

Mr. T. M. of L. (I conceal his Name because of his Modesty) in beginning and ending his Letter at the Importunity of his Friend, thus he begins: *Honoured Sir, were it not for the false Reflections and Calumnies against the Nonconformist-Ministers of England, — your kind and serious, sympathizing, and seasonable Letter had not extorted these sad following Lines. — I am in some sort compelled to comply with your Importunity, in the ensuing epitomiz'd Narrative.* And he concludes with a Spirit that commands from me a great respect to his Christian and humble Temper.

He left his Living in the City of L. where he had been a Minister some Years, having a Wife and several Children, lost 80 l. per an. and 40 l. which should have been paid to him in the beginning of the Year, and in a low Estate left his Living: Yet he continued in Town, living upon meer Providence, till the Oxford Act came out. Then he was forced to leave Wife and Children, being scarce free from an almost deadly Cold, which he thought would put an end to his Life, continuing about three Months upon him. He saw not Wife nor Children after that in eleven Weeks, and durst not come to them publicly in eighteen Months, or thereabouts, and having no Dwelling-place abroad, journeyed in that time (as he thinks) thirteen score Miles on foot, from place to place. If at any time he should reach home by Night, he was in great fear and danger; and durst

durst not stir out of his Chamber; and whenever he went out again, he went either very late, or very early, and sometimes on a sudden, for fear of being taken. After that time he made bold to come home; but the Zeal of some growing so hot, that one Mr. *Grace*, an aged worthy Minister, coming to Town, they made search for him, which he escaped, leaving his Horse in his Inn, and escaping on foot: Then Mr. *M.* thought it unsafe for him to stay, and made haste away the next day, and durst not return in a long time. One time he was sent for to a Magistrate that lay sick, and continued his Night-Visits for a Fortnight; but the Evening before he died, he was sent for in haste by Day-light; and because he was lien to go to the Magistrate's House, he was complained of to the chief Magistrate of the Town, by a Curate, which made him hasten away next morning, (*Saturday*): The chief Magistrate was so kind as to send notice to his Wife, on the Evening of the Sabbath, that her Husband should be gone, for some had been twice with him for a Warrant. After this he absented long. He was cited into the Ecclesiastical Court, for baptizing his own Child. One time as he was going along the Street, one cried out to the Town-Clerk, who went after him, *Do you see the Rogue Mr. R. do you see the Rogue? He is before you:* But God was pleased to give the Town-Clerk another Heart than to apprehend him. But this made him be much from home, and walk the Streets very sparingly. He hath been forced into the Country in Snow and Rain, to preach before day, and to shift from House to House before day; for fear of a Magistrate in the Country, who hath said, he would have him dead or alive. And so not daring to be in the City, nor to appear in the Country, in that Magistrate's reach, he hath been constrained to retire into the Fields and Solitudes, to keep Sabbath all alone. He hath lived upon Providence for eighteen or nineteen Years; and tho he hath been in danger of Life, by reason of Heats and Colds, yet hath he not been forsaken, nor his Seed begged their Bread, nor suffered as they did, *who were destitute, tormented, afflicted, wandring up and down in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, Dens and Rocks, and Caves, &c.* With many other pious Expressions of God's Goodness, and wonderful Providences, his own Unworthiness, as unworthy to be counted a Sufferer, he concludes to his worthy Friend with Praises and Prayer.

Having mentioned Mr. *Grace* of *Sheerston*, as an aged worthy Minister, I remember some short Account of him, which take as followeth.

Mr. *Grace*, upon his Ejection from his Living, on which he lived comfortably, was with his Wife and eleven Children reduced to Straits. Hoping to get some Supplies of Maintenance, he took a Farm of about

T. his.

Thirty Pounds *per an.* — (But preaching in his own House was, it seems by his Letter, a Crime not to be passed by.) He was in a short time

Nonconformity is such a great Sin in some Mens eyes, that it excludes them out of natural Affection, as well as Charity and Compassion. This worthy Person was so near a-kin to A. B. Sh. that he and his Family could not be much nearer. Either he or his Wife was Cousin-German to the late A. B. of Cant.

after his other Troubles, apprehended by two Justices, and, with many of his Hearers, bound over, which was very chargeable. Not long after, he was sent for by a Party of Horse, called out of his Bed, and carried Prisoner to *Stafford*, for what he knew not, nor was ever told. He being unable to bear the Charge of his Imprisonment, made application to the Deputy-Lieutenants, was forced to give in Bond of a hundred Pounds, to appear when called. He was dismissed, after many hard Speeches, but no Charge laid against him. After these Troubles, he was by the Five-Mile-Act necessitated to remove five Miles from the Corporation, to a Place where he lived at great Costs and Charges, separated from

his dear Relations, and his Farm left to the management of Servants, which proved exceedingly to his Loss.

Some Nonconformists in the North of *England* have been often imprisoned. Eight were indicted for *Roman-Catholicks*, and their Estates sequestered: Their Proof and Plea, that they were

When will the Jesuits and Papists be at this pains and charge to prove themselves Protestants? Is this a Sign that Nonconformists are Papists, or in with them in a Confederacy?

true Protestants, both in the Country, and at *London*, cost them about Forty Pounds. They were indicted upon the Statute of Twenty Pound a Month, and Twelve-pence a Sunday. Ten were prosecuted upon the Statute of 35 of *Eliz.* came to *London*, and were put in a way by a noble and powerful Lord, to get off: And had not *Sir William Jones*, then Attorney General, (whose

Name is and will be in honour, while any honour will be paid to a professed and open Assertor of true Loyalty, Laws, and Religion) been so generous and merciful, as to cause but one Fee for ten, (that is, 30 *l.* instead of 210 *l.*) due at the several Offices, they had been great Sufferers, and their streight Condition had been reduced I cannot tell into what Streights and Poverty, they being no ways able to pay it; for even what was paid, was raised by the Charity of good People in *London*.

If any Man that hath any value for the precious Souls of Men, for whom Christ died, and hath any knowledg of the miserable Condition of large and dark Places in those Counties, he may judg it to be a great Disservice

to Jesus Christ, and immortal Souls, to silence, imprison, and punish Preachers, and thereby to leave poor ignorant Souls to the Improvements of natural Ignorance, and to the Power of ill Examples, and irreligious or superstitious Customs. A Traveller, unacquainted with the Country, is not in greater danger in the Night, of falling into Cole-Pits and Precipices, than those poor Souls of falling into the Bottomless-Pit, if they are denied the Guidance of faithful Ministers. Shall poor Souls abide in Darkness, and err from the Ways of God, to their everlasting hazard? and Ministers, that have knowledge of their Danger, and a charitable Sense of their great Need, look on, and see them fall, and sin, and die, and not call, and warn, and exhort, and teach them? Their painful Ministers, to avoid Offence and Dangers, and to shew poor Souls the Way to everlasting Life, have gone under the protection and concealment of the Darkness of the Night, and preached and prayed in Caves and Pits, venturing their Healths and Lives, to save Sinners from everlasting Destruction.

One Mr. *Davis* in *Cumberland* preached in one of them, and got a Cold that proved mortal, leaving six Children to the Charity of good People, and particularly to the Care of Mr. *Richard Wilson*, a Gentleman of a small Estate, but of great Piety and Usefulness in the North, and one who had like to have been ruined on the 35 of *Eliz*.

And what a poor Reward is a Threatning, a Frown, a Fine, and an Imprisonment! Is this a Prophet's Reward! Not to receive them that speak Peace, into their Houses, is an Unkindness: To bid them depart out of their Coast, is a fairer dismissal than to send them to a Prison. If their Rewards be only in this Life, then of all Men, they who are punished in those and other dark and poor Corners of the Land, are most miserable.

Active and successful Mr. *Tho. Tregosse* writes thus to his Brother-Minister: *Warrants are granted for levying Two Hundred and Twenty Pounds upon me; yet God hath kept them off; but I am expecting daily to be stript of all: I am also threatned upon the Corporation-Law. — I am constantly expecting an Imprisonment.*

To avoid that Mischief, and others which he expected, some have removed often from Place to Place. It is not painful to ambitious Men, to remove from a worse to a better, from an old to a new Preferment; but Removes are chargeable and burthenfom, from a Free-Hold to a Farm, to a Chamber, or a part of another Man's House, &c.

I hear, Mr. *Stevens*, of *Fennie-Drayton* in *Leicester-shire*, after his Ejection, removed seven times for his Peace.

Mr. Baxter, (*Life of Mrs. M. B. p. 51.*) historically tells us of his several Removes, which must needs be very troublesome to his sickly Body, and to his Mind fixed upon Studies; and to have no better Accommodation, than a part of a very poor House of a Farmer's in *Totteridge*, where the Rooms smoak'd so extremely, as greatly annoyed the Health of the nobly charitable Mrs. Baxter. The Winter was very hard and cold, the Coal-smoak filled the Room in which they sat all day, so that it was as a Cloud, and they were even suffocated with the Stink. It was ill living without Fire in a cold Winter, and bad having Smoak in their Eyes, and Stink in their Nostrils: It was ill studying for him, in great pain besides; and ill living for her, whose Lungs could not bear Smoak and Closeness.

It doth as often affect me, as I call to mind what Reverend Mr. T. writes, in a Letter to a Relation. — *I am now septuagenarius, and hardly able to pass from one Chamber to another, without some help, over and above that of my Staff. Being driven out of my Place, worth above Two Hundred Pounds per an. with my Wife and eight Children, and by forced Confinements, and sometimes Banishments, for the space of a whole Year from my House and Family, did contract those Weaknesses and Distempers, under which I now languish. But still I have cause to bless God, who corrects me far less than I deserve; and why shall a living Man complain?*

Take another Instance of the Effects of Confinements upon the Health and Life of some more, and upon their Families.

The well-known Divine, Mr. G. Hughes of *Plimouth*, was summoned to appear by a Lieutenant of the Garrison, as from his Superior, and to bring his Son with him. An Officer, with two Files of Musquetiers, was commanded to convey Mr. H. to an Island in the Sea, not suffering his Son (to be his Companion and Comforter) to go with him, but confined him to *Plimouth*. While Mr. H. was in the Island, the Earl of B. came upon it; but Mr. H. could not obtain the Justice or Friendship to speak with him, tho' nothing was laid to his Charge. Here in his *Patmos* he answered Mr. Serjeant's *Sure-Footing*. And here that Disease, by the Saltness of the Air, possessed him, that never left him: His Legs were black and swollen, and could not be recovered. After nine Months Imprisonment, he was offered his Liberty, upon condition of giving Security of a Thousand Pounds, not to live within Twenty Miles of *Plimouth*. He yielded to the Importunity of his Friends, who gave that Bond without his knowledge, to see if better Air would relieve him, and came in a languishing condition to take his leave of his Friends, and the Place of his Ministry, and removed to a Place twenty Miles off, and there died.

His Son Mr. O. was in no Charge or Employment, and therefore was not liable to those Laws which were against such only as were in Places; for all that he was imprisoned, and in *Decemb.* 1665, the Oath which is in the *Oxford Act* was offered him, (before that Act came out) he refusing it, was continued till *March* 30. following: At which time he was brought into the Fort, and required to sign and seal a Promise, not to remain in *Plimouth* forty eight hours after, nor to return thither, without leave from the E. of B. or his Deputy; upon promising so to do, he was dismissed.

Mr. *Tho. Martin*, Lecturer of *St. Andrew Plimouth*, 1661, (certainly for good and innocent a Man as I took him to be could not provoke any Man, much less Authority) was, upon a rigorous Interpretation of Words, suspended *ab Officio*; and one time it being given out, that he intended to preach, was threatned by a Man, who carried Anger in his Breast, and a Sword at his Side, to be pluck'd out of the Pulpit by the Ears.

Anno 1665, he, together with Mr. *Hughes*, Vicar of that Church, was sent to the Island, and kept Prisoner under very hard Circumstances, for ten Months, in which he, his desolate Wife, and eight Children, suffered much Discomfort, and his Estate a great Impairing. He humbly desired a Removal, when the Sicknes was among the Souldiers, and some of them very near his Lodging, which was denied. But at length, for the sake of Liberty from such a Restraint, by the Command of the E. of B. he gave Bond of a Thousand Pounds, and two Sureties to his Majesty, not to inhabit in, or to come within twenty Miles of *Plimouth*, without his or his Deputy's leave. He and his Family suffered great Disadvantages by their Separation from one another; and when his Presence was necessary to advise, relieve, and comfort his Family, in Sickneses, and Death of some, he durst not come any nearer to them. In all this time he was not accused of any Crime, or Breach of Law or Statute, and was never admitted to come before the E. of B. about this Business.

I shall not collect Stories out of what is published to the World, nor gather all which might be soon brought together; but I shall communicate one Story more, to shew them that knew not the Temper of the Times, and to what we may impute many of our Divisions and Miseries, something worth taking notice of.

After Mr. *N. S.* had spent divers Years in *Oxford*, and had been legally ordained by Episcopal Hands, he returned to *P.* the Place of his Nativity, of his Ancestor's Abode, where his Estate and his Relations lived, and betook to his private Studies.

Two Officers of the Garrison came from the Governour (as they said) to his Lodging, (*Octob. 6. 1665.*) and told him, the Governor desired to speak with him at the P. Tavern: Mr. S. hasted thither, where he found divers Ministers on the same Business. After they had been there a while, they perceived a Guard of Souldiers was put upon them. *Octob. 9.* Mr. S. with others, were removed to the Fl. Tavern. Mr. Sh. was rudely treated by the Serjeant, for offering to sleep to his Lodging without his leave. The Serjeant that Night doubled the Guard, and set two Sentinels at his Chamber, and the Liberty of the House was denied him. In the Evening he was conveyed with four Musquetiers, with their Matches lighted, to the Col. who conveyed him to St. Nicholas Island, with Orders from the E. not to converse with Mr. H. and Mr. M. Prisoners there, and to have a Sentinel set at his Chamber-Door, and not to go out of his Chamber without a Guard. He continued under this Restraint, till *Decemb. 4.* In *January* he was brought before the Earl, who told him, If he could satisfy the Bishop, he would be satisfied. The Bishop knowing him in *Oxford*, wrote a very obliging Letter to the Earl, as much in his favour as could be. The Oath in the *Oxford* Act wastendred him, which he refused, as not concerned in the Act it self, when the Act came forth, not then in being. His Prison was changed, and *March 30.* was released upon his Bond to depart the Town within forty eight hours.

Mr. Worts, (commended as a worthy Person, by a Gentleman able to judge) Pastor of a Congregation at *Guestwick* in *Norfolk*, was imprisoned by a Writ *De Excommun. capiend.* taken out *Novemb. 15. 1664.* and continued in the Common-Goal till *Septemb. 3. 1665.* when the Plague was at the height in *London*, he was made close Prisoner until *Novemb. 9.* not knowing by whose Order, or for what additional Offence. *Feb. 2.* he, with six more, were put into the Castle, in a Hole in the Wall, over an Arch, on the West side of the Castle, which had neither Door, Window, nor Chimney. There was room in a Corner for one Truckle-Bed, the rest lay in Hammocks. The Hole had three Wickets into the Felon's Yard, one of which must be open Night and Day, lest they should have been stifled in the Night with the Steam of the Charcoal. For five Weeks the Door below (for the Hole is about forty Steps high, up a narrow Passage in the Wall) was kept lock'd Night and Day. The Keeper usually went away about four of the Clock with the Key to a Neighbour-Village, about a Mile and half distance from the Head-Goaler's House, and returned not till about eight in the Morning, in whose absence none could come to them, whatever occasion might be. During those five Weeks, they were not permitted to set foot into the Yard. If a Prisoner's

Wife

Wife came to see him, he was called down to the Door, and the Keeper would set his Back against one side of the Door, and his Foot against the other, and so the Husband and Wife might only see and speak with each other. They had leave to run up and down Stairs as oft as they would, which was instead of a Walk or Gallery for the space of five Weeks. Their Maid was not allowed to come up with their Provision. After the five Weeks, these Persons were permitted to go into the Cattle-Yard, during the time of their continuance there, which was about two Months; then they were removed to another Prison. They were wonderfully preserved this Year from the Contagion, while the Arrows of the Almighty fell mortally very near them, an one side and another, there being only a Lane between, so that they could both hear and see some that were shut up, crying for Bread, and themselves shut up also, and could not flee, save only into their Strong-Tower, the Name of the Lord, where they found Safety and Peace. Some time after a great Man, then in Power, told the Goaler, he must carry them forthwith to the Castle, and put up each in a Place alone: The Goaler answered, *It cannot be done, the Castle is full, and I daily fear the Plague should break out amongst them*: He replied, *Then put them into a Place together*, adding, *What do I care if the Plague be in it*. Yet were they preserved in that nasty Hole, at whose Wickets came in the odious excrementitious Odors of the Common-Yard of the Felons. One of them was even suffocated by it; the Physician could not help, so long as the Patient was put up there: Upon which an Account was speedily sent to the Sheriff of his low Estate, with a Petition to remove him for a little time, his Life being in danger: The Sheriff answered, He durst not meddle, he must abide it: The Man revived notwithstanding, and lived.

Mr. *Worts* continued Prisoner full seven Years, as the Gentleman remembers, from whom I have this Narrative, and who had it from Mr. *W.* while a Prisoner.

It is observed by the Reverend and intelligent Mr. *Baxter*, that many have been excommunicated in the Diocese of *Norwich*, (and there was a severe Prosecution of the Excommunicate) but to the honour of that most excellent Evangelical Bishop *Reynolds*, it is observed those Proceedings were not from him, who retained that good Spirit which he discovered, when he preached those and other composing and healing Sermons, before and upon the King's Restauration. The Guilt of this Severity and Inhumanity is imputed to Dr. *M.* Chancellor of the Diocese, with reflection upon his Greatness under the Usurpation; but the Chancellor was most away, and left the Management of the Office to inferior Officers,

which was a great Trouble to the good Bishop.

Who doth not see, that some Great Men have ventured to exercise an Arbitrary Power? and what Remedy for the Oppressed? This Greatness was too big for a High-Sheriff, the King's highest Representative in his County, to oppose or offend, by an Act of Justice and Mercy. Such Severities have been used as much without the knowledge of the King, as contrary to his Nature, (and perhaps others in superior Power have been abused by their Inferiors) who declared himself to be against sanguinary Laws, in the Case of Mr. *Holdcraft*; (who was a Prisoner many Years in *Cambridg Castle*, and threatened with Banishment or Death, on 35 *Eliz.*) and was heard to say, It was a barbarous Act in the Bishop of *Bristol*, to be against the removal of worthy Mr. *Thompson* out of a loathsome Chamber above a Privy, when sick of a high Fever, of which he died, in *Bristol-Goal*. His Royal Clemency extended far into the West, in the Enlargement of Mr. *Tregosse*, by a special Order to the Marshal of *Bodmin*, which was a noted Answer to his Prayers; and who released Mr. *Parsons*, and remitted his Fine at the Intercession of the Lord *Newport*. The Justice of several of the Judges, and of some Deputy-Lieutenants, and Justices, who have qualified the Heats of others, deserves an honourable Observation, and they have as great a Share in the Honour of being of the Government, as they who arrogate to themselves the sole or eminent Title, that a Man cannot relate their extravagant Miscarriages, but they are ready to arraign him as a petty Traytor against the Government, thereby to keep Sufferers in awe, from making Complaints, or speaking Truth. But some particular Persons have given all the Vent they could to their Enmity against Nonconformist-Ministers, if not against Religious Duties, and followed them beyond the Boundaries of Law.

Some acting upon the Act of Uniformity beyond Law, have been restless till they procured an Act against Conventicles. Great Complaints were made of the Nonconformists Meetings, when Sir *Edward Turner*, the Speaker, presented the Bill against Conventicles, (the first Act) he told his Majesty: 'Whist we were intent upon these weighty Affairs, we were often interrupted by Petitions, and Letters, and Motions, representing the unsettled Condition of some Counties, by reason of Phanaticks, Sectaries, and Nonconformists: They differ in their Shapes and Species, and accordingly are more or less dangerous; but in this they all agree, they are no Friends to the established Government in Church or State. He calls Conventicles, the Seed-Plots and Nurseries of their Opinions, under pretence of Religious Worship.'

From the few Narratives given in before, and an ordinary Observation of Times, and the Knowledg we have how easy a thing it is to procure Addresses, Motions, Petitions, for any thing, and against any thing, which some great Men would have, we may imagine from what kind of Men such Representations were made. And considering that such a Representation thus made to the King, so long a Stranger in his own Kingdom, by a Speaker in Parliament, it is wonderful, the King did not proceed to an utter Extirpation of all Nonconformists, as Enemies to his Government, and no Lovers of his Person, in whom the Regality is invested. And to tell the King, that all Nonconformists are no Friends to the established Government, was to motion a fair Reward of the Loyalty of very many, who used all Endeavours to restore his Majesty and Government; and to contradict what the King himself told the Ministers of London, on the Day of his happy Return, when the Reverend Mr. *A. Jackson* presented him with a Bible in their behalf, as he passed through St. Paul's Church-Yard, to this effect, *That he must attribute his Restoration, under God, to their Prayers and Endeavours.*

This spiritual Antipathy against good Men hath been very troublesome to many wise and moderate Magistrates, and pressed out all the Sowness of some Mens Spirits into the Cup of the Nonconformists, and forced milder Natures into an obsequious Severity to Pride and Anger, which could not be restrained from falling on these Men, that were to be set at naught; and they who shewed them respects, forfeited the Civilities due to themselves.

I will conclude this Head with a few Instances of this Antipathy and Incivility.

A wealthy Citizen, of very good quality, in time of the Plague went to visit his native Country, and secretly to distribute his Charity, which was proportionable to his Estate and Mind; and being in a Town in the Affize time, was brought before some Justices of the Peace; these demanded Bond for his Behaviour, or else he must to Prison. He understanding himself, and being conscious there was no cause of Imprisonment, refused the first, and having a good Spirit, a good Purse, and good Counsel, escaped the last.

After the *Oxford Act* came out, a peaceable and inoffensive Nonconformist was constrained to think of a Removal from a convenient Settlement. He was necessitated to leave his Family, which Separation was next to an Exile to him, and when he could come home, to come in the Night.

He employed his Friends, and rode about himself, to find an Habitation. After much enquiry he was directed to a very good convenient House, which he was glad of, with respect to his Wife, who was a worthy Gentlewoman, and bore her part of his Sufferings with decency and affection. The Landlord was a Courtier. The Minister took the House of him that was entrusted to let it, gave Earnest, brewed, and prepared for his Settlement; but before he could remove, a Gentleman of that Neighbourhood, who had no power either to let or hinder, came and hung a Lock upon the Door of the House, and wrote a Letter to the Landlord at London, acquainting him with what he had done, and begging his Pardon for the Presumption, for he thought *it was not fit that a Nonconformist should be his Tenant*. Surely this Gentleman looked upon a Nonconformist, as the Samaritans upon the Jews, and would deny him Water, or not receive him into his House, or bid him *God speed*. And so the Gentleman was to seek again for an Habitation, to his great perplexity and trouble.

A Gentleman of Quality and Truth gave me this Relation of one within his own knowledge: One, (saith he) a very worthy Person, was sorely exercised with Witchcraft, which the Witch confessing, was brought before some Justices, one of whom (said to be a famous Persecutor) bad her go home, and *if she bewitched none but Fausticks, she should never be troubled for him*. And so he had no relief from the Law, nor Ease otherwise, till the Witch died, several Years after.

Did they who so strongly brought in our Terms, foresee that there would be Nonconformists, and that Nonconformity would not only eject them out of their Habitations and Benefices, but out of Corporations, and their own hired Houses, but exclude them out of the common Right of Humanity and Justice, then they have the greater cause to repent: If they did not, they are the more innocent Causes of many and great Troubles to many truly good Men, and are engaged to endeavour their Deliverance from all these Troubles.

It is remarkable, that the most active Instruments in this Anti-Evangelical Work, have been none of the best, but indeed the worst of Men.

And of them it may be noted, (1.) What their Quality is, and hath been. (2.) What their Impiety, and heinous Wickedness, of the grossest Nature. (3.) What their Success hath been. (4.) What Appearances have been of God against them, and what their Ends have been. Some of them have been convinced, converted, and taken off from this Way and Course; and some have been made Examples of humane and divine Justice.

There

There is a God's abundance of inferior Officers, that are very vicious and dishonest; and yet nothing is to be seen very remarkably differing them from other vicious and poor People; but that of all Sorts of Instruments these Informers should be noted out by Divine Providence, as Examples of notorious Vices, Falshood, Perjuries, and miserable Deaths, may be a Warning to the worst of Men, not to grow so bad, and bold against the Ways of God.

It is not necessary to refer the following Narratives unto the above-mentioned Heads; I shall not pretend to so much unprofitable Exactness, but relate what is well attested, in a promiscuous way.

About the Year 1674, about twenty five Persons, Men and Women, were indicted for a Rout or Riot in *Stafford-shire*, (that is to say, for a Meeting for Religious Exercise): The Prosecutors were, *Thomas Ward*, Bayliff to the Lord *Stafford*, (executed for Treason, and the Popish Plot) and five more, whereof one died immediatly, others lost their Places, and others came to Poverty.

One *Holmes*, an Informer, hunting to find out Mr. *Bakewell's* Meeting in the Night, fell into a Pit of Water, and was in danger to be drowned, had not some helped him out; which Danger did operate upon him, so as to say, that he would go no more upon that account.

And Mr. S. Minister of B. met Mr. *Bakewell*, and professed he was sorry for any thing he either said or did against him, to bring him into Trouble.

It is observed, That those who became Enemies to Mr. *Bakewell* of *Burton*, had been Professors of Piety, but fell from it, and they fell into great and apparent Decays of Estates, even to Poverty. [Note, Most commonly they who never made a shew of Piety, or fell from it, take the way of Informing.] — Godliness is gainful, and hath the Promise of the Life that now is; but Ungodliness hath the contrary Curses.

I will confirm this Observation with a fearful Example of Apostacy and Wickedness, most remarkably punished, with Ruine of a good Estate, and a most miserable shameful Death.

The Narrative was communicated to me by a Gentleman of great Worth.

John Hunnucks of *Braintree* in *Essex*, was the Son of a serious, discreetly pious, wealthy Draper and Grocer in that Town. A pious Education and Example had little Efficacy upon him; but being witty, and capable of the Management of his own and his Father's Trade, was left Co-Executor with his Mother-in-Law, who prudently agreed with him,

to get into her own hands her Part, and the Portion of one Maid. He married the Daughter of a very worthy Person, had four Children by her, observed Family-Duties, and wanted not Gifts, was wont to go sometimes to hear the Nonconformists, who were afterwards persecuted by him.

Not many Months after his Wife died, he grew wild and debauched, swearing, drinking, and with his drawn Sword forcing others to drink up to his Measure. He was very vexatious to his Dealers, and unrighteous in his Trade, unnatural and unjust in detaining his Sister's Portion, compelling her Husband to go to Law, forswearing himself about his Father's Will, that it was lost, and that his Father died in Debt as much as the Estate would satisfy, which was prized at 2200 *l.* besides 4 or 500 *l.* brought in as bad Debts, the most of which this Man recovered. He sued his Brother-in-Law, arrested him, and in person goes with the Bayliff to see him in Prison, not ceasing to put him to great Charges, till his Brother-in-Law died. In nine or ten Years time he consumed all his Father left him and his other Children, ran far into Debt, and cast himself into the King's-Bench.

The first Lord's Day after the Act against Conventicles came in force, he began to inform, and (as was said) he reckoned to get Sixty Pounds per Week by that good Work, after the failing of other Trades. But God would have stopp'd him, if his Heart had not been hardned; for before that Lord's-Day came, one of his Children looking into a Tub of Water, fell into it, and was drowned. When he heard of it in an Ale-house, he made no haste home; and when he came, he bad his Neighbours, that came to see if they could recover the Child, be gone, they had no Business there. The Child (as is remembred) was buried on the Saturday, and the next day he went and informed the Officers of a Meeting, with Witnesses to attest his Information. The Officers charged him to go along with them, and forced him in, (he being unwilling to go in when he came to the Door,) and shew them the People: When he came in, they shov'd him up over against the Preacher, he would neither look up, nor speak, but fell a trembling. The Officers cried, *This is your Informer*, he answered, *I am no Informer, I will be no Informer*. But being reproached for his Faint-heartedness, and animated by some, he came again the next Lord's Day, and continued the greatest part of that Summer with great Fury, taking some with him, riding about, and searching, to the Expence of about Fifty Pounds, but not getting Five, (a thriving Trade!) During this Time he grew more debauched and vile, reckoning this amongst his Glories, that he had converted, and brought more to Church than all the Preachers. 'Tis said, he fillip'd up a Shilling, to see whether he should

go to God or the Devil, as that fell Cross or Pile. He hath sworn he would kill the Preacher, and forsworn himself often, swearing such Persons to be at the Meeting, who were not, but divers Miles off. When one Mr. *Bromhall*, an aged pious Man, was to be buried, he provided several Fiddlers to go to the Burial-House, where he pranced with his Horse before the Door, and broke the Windows with his Staff, and would have the Fiddlers go along with him, playing by the Corps, with Language fitted for his Mouth and Actions.

He found no Success or Advantage by his Informing, but about a Year after God took him to a Reckoning: He was broken and blasted in his Body, as before in his Estate; his Eyes sunk in their Holes, and his Flesh consumed, &c. so that he was not known to his Acquaintance; his Strength failed him, that he could not go abroad; he cast away his Estate, and his Friends cast him off: And now what place was left to receive him? None, but a common lower Room in a poor Hostler's House, in the Noise and Company of poor rude Children. Thus his Pride was stained and humbled. But his Heart seemed to be more humbled yet, because he sent for the Preacher whom he had disturbed and persecuted, a first, second, and third time; and when he came to visit him, he spake, *You are the Person I have a great desire to see; I think you, and the People whom I did persecute, to be my Friends.* He said, he had been so vile a Wretch, and guilty of so many and great Sins, that he knew not by which he had most dishonoured God: He had sinned against Light, and was afraid God was not at peace with him; and that it had been better for him he had been a Toad than a Man. He was very importunate and urgent with the Minister to pray with him, and would have one stand at the Door in the mean time, that he might not be disturbed by any Company, and that the Children should be all put out. When the Minister ended his Prayer, he was very thankful to him, and reached out his hand to him, and held him long. He said, he desired to repent of all his Sins, was afraid, if God should try him with longer Life, he should return to his Filthiness; but he looked for Death, which came and took him away a day or two after, but (as 'tis feared) unprepared and impenitent, upon such Reasons as I am loth to recite out of the Narrative, for their ill Example.

There are several remarkable Passages of God's Judgments upon him: (1.) He had one Child drowned, when he went to inform. (2.) Another choak'd at Nurse, after he had gone on a while. (3.) Was crossed in his Hopes of Gain by Informing. (4.) The deformed Consumption of his Body, and being cast off by his Friends. (5.) That so haughty a Person should lie in a contemptible Place and State. (6.) That a third Child should be taken by an Host, to be kept in Charity. (7.) That the only

visible Sign of Repentance should be, to send for that Minister, and desire his Prayers, rather than any other. (8.) That being a Prisoner at *London*, he should, upon leave obtained, come to die in that Place and State, in the Face of his Companions, to convince and terrify them, and of them that he had persecuted, to acknowledg his Fault.

This Service proves (as the Devil's commonly doth) unprofitable; a Man may spend all in it, but is very uncertain of gaining any thing by it. It is rarely seen, that the Devil bears the Charges of his Servants, as others have found to their Cost, in this present Life.

One *W. V.* of *M. H.* hath been very poor ever since he took up the Calling, having scarce Bread to eat, and most remarkably visited in his Family. His Brother Informer, *J. H.* about two Years after the Act against Conventicles came out, threw up the Trade as unprofitable; and since he became an Auditor of *Mr. M. C.* And one time this *J. H.* was informed of (by new Informers) as being present at a Meeting there, and was fined 5 s. He was a very serious and devout Hearer.

After Sir *John Hartopp* was chosen Knight for *Leicester-shire*, against a great Opposition, they who voted for him, were called *Hartopians*, and a Revenge was contrived upon the Protestant Dissenters of *H.* To that end, one *J—W—* was made Constable, who indicted them all, not one spared, upon the Statute of Twenty Pounds per Month; which Fines amount to so great a Sum, that understanding Persons compute, if the whole Town of *Harborough* were to be sold for ready Money, one Moiety of the Purchase would not discharge the Fines.

In *Decemb. 1679*, this *Jo. W—* was thrown into *Northampton-Goal*, and tho none came in against him at the Assizes, the Judg saw sufficient cause to continue him in Prison; but upon great Sollicitation, he was bailed till the Summer-Assizes. Within three Weeks after his coming home to *Harborough*, he took upon him to be Informer for the King. At the Summer-Assizes, he appeared to save his Bail, and to receive a Sentence of Condemnation (as it proved) from Judg *Ellis*, and Monday following was appointed for Execution, but it was by some means, not publicly known, procured he might be respited till Thursday following, at which time there was a vast Confluence of People come together, from the Town and Country, a great way about, who knew him to be a grand Malefactor, to see Execution: But in the Nick of Time a Reprieve came down. (as some have said, without the King's Knowledg.) So little abash'd was he at the Sentence of Death, that within an hour after he committed his common Sin in the Goal, as was reported upon good Credit.

And

And on the expected Execution-Day, he made himself merry at the great Concourse that came to the sight of it. But after this he came home again, and made great Brags, that the Fanaticks should repay his Charges, (of procuring Reprieves, and other Charges, which cost some hundreds,) reckoning his Moiety would come to Four Hundred Pounds. But as he could not leave the pursuit of his evil Deeds, so the Justice of God pursued him, and took him, (for Horse-stealing, Coining, &c.) and Vengeance fell upon him at *Wibich*, where he was, after many Escapes, once again condemned, and executed.

There is a Successor of his near the same place, and three of his perjured Hirelings, who take no warning as yet, and may in time become Examples to them that take no warning: They can to appearance as freely forswear themselves as they can speak, being hardened in Sin, and senseless of Hell, and having Countenance, dare shew their Faces.

At *East-Salcomb* in *Devon*, there dwelt one *Jean Baston*, a Widow, aged, and blind, who for a supposed Conventicle kept at her House, *Anno 1673*, was fined Twelve Pounds, and for non-payment of it, was threatned with a Goal. After some Weeks, the Officers came and broke open her Doors, and carried away much Goods above the value, terrifying her over and over with the Goal, and as was conceived, labouring to extort dangerous Words from her. They sold as many Goods as were worth thirteen Pound, for Fifty Shillings; six Hogheads, valued at Forty Shillings, for nine Shillings; and Pewter, Feather-Beds, &c. for Twenty Shillings; and demanded of her Tenants her Rent, by which means she suffered much.

This is signed by *J. B.* and the Story related by another hand, and sufficiently attested.

The Constable having seized *J. Baston's* Goods, told me, *We have been up and down about our Office, seizing the old Woman's Goods: This is the Fruit of your Rebellion. And as for Mr. Geo. Cawley, (the Preacher) he hath spoken Treason: To whom I replied, No, Sir, I hope not: Yes, said he, and if he do not die, I will die for him.* Sir — managed that false Accusation against him, from which he was cleared at the Assizes.

The Constable that falsely accused *Mr. Coles* of *S.* was taken ill at *Exeter*, and continued ill a Night and a Day: On Friday he endeavoured to go homewards with his Neighbours. In his Journey a wild Duck flew over his Head and backward and forward, at which his Horse made a stop, and would not go forward. His Company demanded the reason of his Stand; he replied, he could not go further, *I see a Fire before me.* A while after he went on; but the same Fire followed him to and fro all the way home-

ward. After his coming home, he fancied Thieves to be about his House, attempting to break open the Doors; he heard such a Sound and Noise, he sent down his Servant-Maid to see, who found all fast and quiet. She having lighted a Candle, he cried out, There are some coming up Stairs with great Lights, &c. Thus he continued till Lord's-Day at Night, and about two or three in the Morning died, senseless of his Condition. Thus it proved true, Mr. C. should die, or he die for him; he died, but not for Mr. C.

The Constable and Assistants, that ransacked the old Widow's House, brought forth the Pulpit into the High-Way, with half a Hog'shead of Sider, and therewith a Company of base Fellows drank Healths in the Pulpit, and when they had done, brake the Pulpit in pieces.

Edm. Warden's Bible was distrained for his Fine of Three Shillings, when other Goods were refused.

See the Piety of some of our Suppressors of Conventicles: Preachers are threatned with Hanging, and the Death of Traytors; they pull down a Pulpit, to set up Healthing in it; tear the Pulpit, distrain and sell the Bible to choose, when they might have choice of other Goods.

Novemb. 1670, an Information was taken by J. T. Esq; and given by certain lewd Fellows, against some near *Cruse Morchard* in *Devon*. The Informers were, *John Partridg*, that went always armed for fear of Bay-liffs, *Chr. Short*, and *Jo. Short*: These lay lurking about the House of *Tho. Melshurst*, suspecting a Meeting. Soon after they gave out, there had been Praying, or Preaching, or Expounding there, but which they could not tell, because they were kept off from the House by a great Bull-Dog, (which was shortly after poysoned.) The Justice took a general Information, (whether upon Oath or not, is not said) and sent out his Warrants to bring certain Persons before him; one of which understanding the Informers were in the House, desired the Justice to call them, and asked the Informers, how they could tell there was Praying, or Preaching, or Expounding? and desired to know which was done, seeing by their own Confession they were kept off by the Dog. The Justice perceiving them to be at a loss for an Answer, made Answer for them, *They might know well enough which it was by the Tone*; and upon that convicted them, and among the rest, one *Nich. Melshurst*, who was two Miles from the Place at the same time, as could be sufficiently proved, paid his Fine. And *Agnes Brook*, Daughter of *G. Br. of Morchard*, was convicted and fined, who had been dead several Years before; I hope therefore she paid not her Fine, nor was threatned, or sent to Goal for Non-payment.

Now

Now observe the Vices of these Persons, and their Ends by divine Justice. *P.* and *Sh.* were strongly suspected for stealing six Oxen, four from *G. Bodley* of *Morchard*, and two from *Hen. Lee* of the same Parish: They were apprehended, and brought to their Trial, and *Sh.* was found guilty, and burnt in the hand, and since hath consumed his Estate, and is fled the Country for fear of Arrests. *P.* died not long after; and the other *Sh.* was taken in the Act of the unnatural Sin of Buggery, was found guilty, and died for it.

One *Helmere* was suspected to be a Conspirator in the said Information, and was apprehended as a Partner with the forenamed in stealing the Oxen, found guilty, and burnt in the hand. And since that, he and his Son were taken in the Act of Burglary, was sent to Prison, which he brake twice, and is fled, and not taken.

These Relations are ready to be attested by Persons of unsuspected Credit.

Aug. 26. 1676, four Informers had laid a Design to take *Mr. J. Barret* of *Nottingham*, and his Hearers, who at that time had none to give intelligence from abroad of any coming to disturb them. At the Town's-End the Informers divided themselves; some rode for a Warrant, others came to espy the Meeting. One of them walked again and again between two Stiles leading into the Yard, belonging to the House where the Meeting was; and yet (as he confessed to the Owner of the House some time after) he knew not what ailed him, but he had not power to go over the Stile, tho sometimes he had his hand upon it; and tho the House and Stacks about it, were shewn him before he came to Town, and had no reason to doubt but that was the House, it standing at a distance from any other House, yet he turned to another House, being nearest to it, where a Woman being at home, was asked, *Whether it was not such a Man's House? or whether the Meeting was not there?* And she saith still, she was so surprized with fear, that she could make him no Answer: whereupon he said to the Woman, *Canst thou not speak? art thou dumb? or art thou mad?* This Account she gave then, but it being so long since, she may have forgotten; but being lately asked of it, she saith, he said, *Art thou a Fool?* But by this Confusion they were in, the People met, were gotten away before any Informers came in. The Informers haunted them several times after, and one time came in when there were but four besides the Family, and the Children of the Town under sixteen Years of Age. When they saw how they were crossed several times, and *Mr. Barret* had charged him that came first, and his Companion, with breach of God's Law, not keeping the Sabbath-Day, but hindring others, and

and put him in mind of a great Fit of Sickneſs he had, when he lay under very great Terrors, how often he had viſited him, and how welcome he was to him then, to viſit and pray with him. This Informer and his Companion ſeemed to relent. One of them was (not long after) put into the Goal for Deer-ſtealing.

Mr. O. H. makes this Relation of a great Amazement and Diſturbance of Mind, upon ſome that were to take the Names of his Hearers.

' May 22. 1670. As I was riſing out of my Bed, my Servant came to me, and told me, there were two Men deſired to ſpeak with me; whoſe Buſineſs was to ask me, If I durſt adventure to preach in the Chappel, Mr. H. being abſent, and no notice being given to the People, many of whom would come, and be diſappointed? I utterly denied at firſt: They were loth to bring me into Trouble; yet if I was willing, the Chappel-Doors ſhould be opened, and the Bell rung. I conſidered of it, conſulted ſome Neighbours, begged direction of God, and about an hour after I conſented, upon theſe Conſiderations: They were my ancient People, I was forcibly thruſt from them, the Spirits of Men were much moderated; I knew the Sabbath would be profaned; it being *Whit-Sunday*, many Strangers walking abroad to ſee their Friends; Quakers twiſt us, that we will not venture upon Hazards: But above all, my Lord's Example, and the Neceſſity of Souls; and who knows what Good may be done?

' Upon this, about nine of the Clock, I went up, read, ſung, prayed, preached quietly, on *Judg. 5. 31. Let them that love him be as the Sun, when he goeth forth in his Strength.* About one in the Afternoon we met again, and about three of the Clock, Mr. St. Ell. brought Th. H. Church-Warden, and Sam. W. Overſeer, awing them with a Fine of Five Pounds if they reſuſed. St. Ell. put in the Officers before him, who were exceedingly daunted. One of them was ſo awed and aſhamed, that he crept down into a Seat, and was ſo exceeding ſick, that he could not give account of one Perſon. The Informer went along among the People, looked ſtreight at me, ſaid nothing, went down the Alley, and look'd upon the People as he went along. It was a Cauſe of Diſtraction to us; but I went on, and called to the People to look Proofs, which would be a Help to them againſt that Diſtraction. When they went out, St. E. ſent Th. H. again into the Chappel, to take Names: He again, walked through the North Alley, ſtood at Seats ends, went out into the Chappel-Yard, where they conferred Notes, writ down Names: And tho' the Chappel was full of their own Neighbours, yet they could not take ten Names, they were ſo confounded. The Munday ſeven-Night follow-

following, Mr. *W.* and Mr. *C.* two Justices, took my Business into Examination. The Informer *St. E.* stood there, examining the Officers by Interrogations: *Did not you see such and such there?* And so they extorted ten Names of many Hundreds that were present.

July 13. 1670, J. M. Constable, Th. H. S. W. came to make distress of my Goods, with three Bearers to carry them away. The Constable took hold of the Bed whereon I lay, put off his Hat, saying, *I seize upon this Bed for his Majesty's use.* I told them, It was enough for them to mark them, and leave them, till they had Chapmen to buy them: They said, the Informer would buy them. So they took Bed, Bedding, Tables, Chairs, Chests, Books, to the value of Fourteen Pounds, for Ten Pounds. My Wife desired them to take Chairs, rather than our Meal-Chest; but they laid a Curtain upon the Floor, and poured out the Meal upon it, and took away our Chest. They carried the Goods into an Alehouse, and drank upon them, got Prizers, who prized them at 10*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* They had bespoken a good Dinner, saying, They would bring Over-plus Goods enough to pay for all. They prized ten Books at thirty Shillings. They caused the Bell-man to cry the Goods in *Hallifax*, *August 13.* but could sell none of them. The Justices bad the Officers to take them themselves. They answered, they had Goods enough. The Constable grew weary of the Business,

delivered all to the Hands of the succeeding Constable. The House where they were laid up grew weary of them, and desired the next Constable to find a Room for them, or they would cast them out: They got leave to set them in a Barn

in *Coley-Hall*. *June 6. 1671.* One *Robert Reyner* of *Wakefield*, brought a Cart and five Horses to fetch them away, — When they laid a Chair in the Cart, one said, *Where's Heywood's God now, that he used to pray to?* They remained still at *Wakefield*, *August 15. 1680.*

*Nonconformists Goods
a dead Commodity;
Who paid for the
Feast then?*

In *December 1668*, Mr. *John Shuttlewood*, sometimes Minister of *R.* in the County of *Leicester*, was taken with many others, singing a Psalm by *M. B.* and thirty or forty Horsemen with Swords drawn and Pistols cock'd, several of both Sexes were beaten and driven into the Field, and dismissed upon promise of appearing next day before some Justice of Peace; Mr. *Sh.* was examined by Justice *S.* when he had been at his Parish Church to hear Divine Service? Mr. *Sh.* answered, he knew none charged him for Absence: the Justice asked him, if he would promise to go the next Sunday? Mr. *Sh.* answered, he did not know how Divine Providence might dispose of him before that time; upon this the Justice made him his *Mittimus* for:

a Breach of the 35 of *Eliz.* and delivered him to the Custody of one *Charles Gibbons*, a Quarter-Master in a Troop of the Trained Bands, to convey him to *Liechester* Goal.

It being too late that Night, they rested where they were, and *Mr. Sh.* craving a Blessing upon their Meat, *Gibbons* comes into the Room, and swore a bloody Oath, and said, *What, are you preaching?* Soon after a Neighbour Gentleman came, and made request, that *Mr. Sh.* and the rest of the Prisoners might go that Night to their own Houses, and offered a Bond of a thousand Pounds for their Appearance; the Gentleman pressing hard for that Night's Liberty. *Gibbons* girt his Sword about him, and swore desperately, that since he loved them so well, he should go with them, and continued swearing all the Night, that in case he firr'd, (to use his own Phrase) he would make the Sun shine through him. Next Morning *Gibbons* sent the Prisoners away with some Souldiers, and staid himself with the Gentleman; and glad they were, they were going to Prison, as being in worse than Prison till they were there. *Mr. Sh.* and the other continued in Prison till the 24th of *February*, and were then dismiss'd.

Anno 1670, soon after the Act against Conventicles came out, the said *Gibbons* came with armed Men, and took *Mr. Sh.* and six or seven at a House in *Tb.* and carried them to an Ale-house, and after some time dismiss'd them upon promise to appear at four a Clock next Morning at that Place; next day he carried them all to three several places in *Leicestershire* and *Northamptonshire*, keeping them a considerable while in each Place, and at last brought them to *C.* in *Leicestersh.* where Justice *C.* would have extorted some Confessions from the Prisoners, and *Gibbons*, though commonly a desperate Swearer, told the Justice in the presence of them all, *He would damn his Soul for none of them.* He could not

*A common Swearer
afraid of Perjury and
Damnation, is much bet-
ter than those who fear
neither Perjury nor Hell.
Indeed he could not swear
a Conventicle, for as the
last Sentence went out of
the Preacher's Mouth,
he came to the Window
and swore a dreadful
Oath.*

swear there was a Conventicle, whereupon the Justice was about to dismiss them: but a Lawyer present told him, he might convict them upon notorious Evidence, which he did, and sent Warrants to distrain upon *Mr. Sh.* for 20 l. and 20 l. on the owner of the House, and 5 s. a piece on others; *Mr. Sh.* conveyed away his Cattel, but the rest paid. *Anno 1672*, while *Mr. Sh.* had the King's Licence, *Gibbons* came upon him, and took him and the Master of the House, and brought them before Capt. *C.* of *L.* who then refused to act, but afterwards did send out his Warrants to distrain 20 l. on *Mr. Sh.* 20 l. on the House, &c. but both

escaped, tho not without Damages: but great Fines were laid upon the Hearers.

Hearers. In the end of February, 74, *Gibbons* came with armed Men to Mr. *Sh.*'s House in *Lubnam, Leicester-shire*, roaring into the Congregation after his wonted manner, and took several Names, appointing Mr. *Sh.* and them to meet him next day, at an Alehouse in *Shoaresby*, to appear before his Great Master, Col. *F.* who was wont to furnish him with Warrants before-hand. But the Colonel's Son, a Son of his old Age, dying that morning, (who fell sick, as it is said, that Day his Father gave his Warrants to break up that Meeting.) They all appeared according to promise, and were dismiss'd, upon promise to appear upon lawful Summons. Instead of such a Summons, *Gibbons* got a Warrant of Sir *Tb. B.* (not long after deceased) to distrain upon Mr. *Sh.* for forty Pounds: And the Officers took away seven Milch-Cows of Mr. *Sh.*'s, and offered them to Sale; and the best Chapman that came, was *D. S. of M.* who paid seven Pounds for them, and Six-pence Earnest, (without the privity of Mr. *Sh.*) which was paid to the Officers, who paid it to the Justices, who gave Receipts for the Money.

D. S. branded four of the Cows, and joisted them in the Grounds of one *J. W. of Langton*. *Gibbons*, and his great Companion *Percy*, hearing of the Cows, go to the Constable, who had a Warrant to distrain upon the said *Jo. Wilson* for 2 l. 15 s. for being at the same Meeting; *Gibbons* and *Percy* got the Warrant out of the Constable's hands, pretending to take something out of it, but it was to put more in, viz. to empower *Percy* to distrain the four Cows. And so both went into the Ground, and drave the Cows, impounded them about an Hour, and then took them out, and drave them to *Gilmerton*, where they were met by another of their Companions, one *Savage*, and set a Guard upon the Cows. *D. S.* hearing these things, went to Capt. *C.* for a Warrant, to fetch *Gibbons* before him upon suspicion of Felony; but the Justice refused to give him his Warrant except he would lay flat Felony to their charge, which *D. S.* could not do, because they impounded them first. He goes to *Gibbons*, to know by what Authority he took away the Cows, demanded the Cows, which they refused to do, *Gibbons* telling him, he should not have a Tail of them to wipe his Mouth with. He went to Mr. *H. Under-Sheriff*, for a *Replevin*, which he told him he could not grant, because it was against the King.

One of the Persons distrained upon, came to pay 2 l. 15 s. to the Officers; *Gibbons* caught up the Money, and gave it to his Partner *Percy*, and said, he should be Constable; and away they went with it.

D. S. heard, that *Gibbons* had conveyed away the four Cows in the Night, after which he never heard of them more, and sent for a Writ for him; but when the Bayliffs came to arrest *Gibbons*, they found he was

protected by the above-said Col. F. a Parliament-Man, (and in the List of Pensioners) as one of his Servants.

But the Justice and Vengeance of God took him out of that Sanctuary; for being at *Lutterworth*, in *Decemb. 1675*, very full of Drink, and having that day given out many threatening Speeches against several Dissenters, he would not be persuaded to stay all Night, tho it was late, about nine in the Night, but would go home: But when he had gone about half a Mile towards home, he fell into a Ditch, through which a little Water runs, and falling asleep (as we must suppose) he damm'd up that little Issue of Water by which he was found drowned next Morning by a Milk-Maid, in a very remarkable manner; for all his Body was above Water, except his Neck and Face: neither was the Water high enough, when it was damm'd up, to cover all his Face, for some part of his Nose and Forehead were seen above Water.

A Conforming Minister, and a worthy Man, since deceased, who knew him well, entred this following Remark in *Beard's Theatre of Judgments*: '*Charles Gibbons*, a notorious Swearer and Drunkard; having been at '*Lutterworth* in *Leicester-shire*, being full of Drink, and it being late at '*Night*, was dissuaded from going home, which was at *Kimcot*, two Miles '*off*, swore he would go home in spite of all the Devils in Hell; but he '*was found dead next morning in a shallow Run of Water*, which did not '*cover his Body, betwixt Lutterworth and Misterton.*

One of *Gibbons's* Companions, that had been drinking with him that Evening, and parted with him when he went out of Town, was sadly affrighted in his going home to his own House in *Lutterworth*, with something like a black Sow, which he said, when he heard next Morning that *Gibbons* was dead, was the Devil going to drown *Gibbons*.

When *Gibbons* was found, he had not one Penny in his Purse, and his Goods were valued at Two Shillings and Six-Pence. Here's one Example more of outrageous Profaneness, a miserable sudden Death, and deep Poverty. Who ever read or heard of an Informer, blest in Body or Goods?

And the Fortune of his Companion *Percy* ran very low; for all he could muster up to pay the Charges of *D. S.'s* Suit, which was 9 *l.* 10 *s.* came but to six Pound, made off the little Goods he had, fled his Country, became a Driver of Beasts about *Issington*, afterwards a Foot-Souldier, afterwards a Beggar, and so he died, as is commonly said.

In *October, 1681*, *Watson* and *Holdsworth*, both Inhabitants of *Deeping* in *Lincoln-shire*, (*Watson* was a very witty, close, cunning Fellow; *Holdsworth* was a heavy, clumsy, poor Fellow; the one fitted to direct, the

the other to follow) came to *Okham* in *Rutland*, (in hopes of good Markets, by the Sale of Modesty, Truth, and their precious Souls, and other Mens Goods) there a Nonconformist Preacher and his Congregation met out of Church-time : The Preacher kept up in an upper Room, and the Doors of the House were lock'd, so that the Informers could only sometimes hear a Voice indistinctly, but they heard enough for their purpose : They went and swore against the Preacher, (whose Name they had learned since their coming to Town) that there was an unlawful Meeting in his House. Upon which a Warrant was issued out for Twenty Pounds upon him; and yet they named no Preacher, nor Hearers.

They informed of a Meeting of Quakers, and swore there were ten Persons at it, and particularly one *Bowman*, who was not there, nor had been there in half a Year before.

These Fellows, in their return home, were overtaken by a sober Person, who rode about two Miles with them, and, to their great vexation, discoursed of the Calling of Informers, and the untimely Ends of several of them, and therefore warn'd them often and earnestly to take heed : But *Watson* said, The Dissenters were Hell-born Rogues, and an Informers Trade was lawful.

About *February* following (last past) *Watson* fell ill, his Tongue was black and swelled, some while before he died, and led his Companion the way into the other World, where there is not as much as a Preacher's Voice to be heard. Within a Week after *Holdsworth* followed him, crying out in his Sickness, *The Devil, the Devil, he will fetch me, do not you see him ?* and wishing he had not engaged in that Way.

These miserable Wretches were poor and broken Men before they took this Trade, were defeated of the Fines levied upon their Informations, in the Parts where they lived, and died extreme poor.

Some Souldiers came one Lord's-Day, in *April* last, 1682, Low-Sunday, as it is remembred, to break up a Meeting, and to take Mr. *Browning* of R. in *Northampton-shire*. The Constable admonished them to be well advised what they did : For (said he) *when Sir ——— was alive, he eagerly prosecuted these Meetings, and engaged eight Souldiers of the County-Troop therein; whereof my self was one. Sir ——— himself is dead, (it is said, he died not long after) six of the eight Souldiers are dead; some of them were hanged, and some of them broke their Necks; and I my self fell off my Horse, and broke my Neck in the Act of Prosecuting them, and it cost me thirty Shillings to be cured and recovered. It hath given me such warning, that for my part I am resolved I will never meddle with them more.* He told this

Story to them all at several times that day. This Story is related by others with some considerable Circumstances; but this being the more moderate Relation, I give it almost in the very same Words, in which it was sent from a good and reputable hand to a Friend.

Several Justices of Peace were in a great Heat that day in the pursuit of the Preacher, and the Meeting; but the Birds were flown, before they could cast their Net, and so escap'd.

I do not hear that this Constable, for all his Conviction, is at any time a Hearer at that Meeting. It is remarkable, how such Persons may be restrained, and how readily the Conscience, a little awakened, makes Constructions of the Divine Providences to be Acts of Judgment, and Admonitions to them.

From the same hand I am assured of another Example: Since that, *W. H.* one of the Church-wardens of the same Parish, and one of the most imbittered Enemies of the Meetings, who had often Quarrels with some of his near Relations about them, and especially the Night before he died, who was suddenly struck dead in his own Yard, and never spoke, nor breathed one Breath after he was taken with it: As he had no notice of its Arrest, till it came; so he gave no notice of his being to die, to any other. Surely the Constable must needs be confirmed in his Resolutions against Acting, by this sudden Death. Some threatening Words against the Barn, the common Name of Meetings, spoken by him, are by some remembred; but general Words are most sparing, and I will content myself with them.

That it may not be thought that our Nonconformist Brethren do stretch and enlarge small and ordinary Occurrences, and Acts of Divine Providence, I will shew you what Caution and Modesty is to be seen in their Accounts of Passages. One writes thus, who is known to have suffered Imprisonment, and to wade through many Troubles, and is at this time under a most severe and watchful Eye: *As to my self, I have been so careless in keeping any exact Account of what I have met with, that I cannot do it: In the general, I can only say this, That in all I have met with, God hath so dealt with me, that I have suffered very little.* Another to his Friend: *I could have sent you some other Accounts, but that I and others are afraid to grate too much upon some Persons.* And another to his enquiring Friend, with a like Modesty: *Thus much I know in the general, that several foul Perjuries have Informers in this County been guilty of, for which some of them have been prosecuted and convicted, and afterwards fled and absconded, to escape Punishments. — And very many of the Informers and Persecutors, have been Persons* of

of most profligate Lives.— And the Hand of God hath most eminently appeared against some of them, by untimely Deaths, by the Hand of God remarkably stretched forth against them, as I have been certainly informed, by Persons of undoubted Credit; but in regard I cannot give an exact and particular Account of all Circumstances, I am constrained to pass by these Things in silence, than to wrong the Account by any Mistakes.

I cannot pass over one Observation within mine own view. In the Country where I live, the Informers are a new Set of Men; some that were Informers in former Years are yet alive, but desist and refuse to inform, either upon Conviction of Conscience, Fear of Evil, Observation of the short, shameful, and miserable Ends of others, or other strong Restraints upon them. I am credibly informed of one, whose Name and Person I know, that hath gone to a Nonconformist Preacher, with these or the like Words: *Sir, I have done you Wrong, and brought Trouble upon you; I pray forgive me, &c.*

But most free and full, truly pious and penitent, is this Copy of a Letter, which was sent by one that had been an Informer, to a molested Dissenter, faithfully transcribed by me in the Informer's own Words.

A Letter of a penitent Informer.

Goodman Fenn,

I Acknowledg mine Error, and that I did foolishly in coming to your House, and in disturbing the Company which were met there, and in bringing you and them on the Stage, and into a suffering Condition; which hath several times troubled me very much, and at this time lies heavy upon me, because I am not in a Condition to return you and your Friends, what is out of your and their Pockets: But if ever it shall please God to make me in a Condition able thereto, I do intend, to the best of my Power, to bear your and your Friends Disbursements, which you and your Friends were put to by my occasion, by returning to you and them, some of what you and they have been forced to pay by my means. And in the mean time, I do earnestly desire you, and your Friends which have been Sufferers with you, to forgive me the Wrong which I have done to every one of you. I do desire you, and all that were Partakers with you in your Sufferings, to be earnest with God in your Prayers for me, not once, but often, to desire the Lord to forgive me the Sin which I committed against him, in what I did against you, and them which were met at your House, when I disturbed Mr. King in his Exercise. How do I know but that God may hear your Prayers for me, and turn his fierce Wrath from me, you being the Persons grieved?

ved? *The Almighty God hath been pleased to encourage me to send to you all, which are concerned in the Suffering, by what he did in the Case of Job, chap. 42. vers. 7, 8, 9. So the Lord of Mercy move all your Hearts to pray for me, that he would pardon my Sin, for not doing that which was right to those that were worshipping of him; and it may be the Wrath of God may be appeased at your Request, and have Mercy upon me, and not deal with me according to my Desert. I hope that God of his infinite Mercy will forgive that Sin of doing his Prophets harm, and for offending of his little Ones; and also give me Grace for the Time to come, not only to forbear doing his Prophets harm, and not offending of his little Ones, but do the best I can to defend his Prophets, and cherish his little Ones. The Words of Saul are verified in me, I find it hard to kick against the Pricks.*

Hoxne, Suff.
July 8. 1680.

R. S.

I have by these Instances cleared the Ground of the Observations laid down in the Entrance of these Narratives, which I do heartily wish may become effectual Admonitions and Warnings to them that walk in their Steps, to turn them back, before they fall under the like Observation, as Examples of God's Displeasure.

I shall propose some other Objects of God's Displeasure, tho not of Informers, but of such as have opened their Mouths in Menaces against Ministers, that have declared a Spirit of Disobedience against God, and Persecution against his Servants.

The great Use that some make of the Laws is, to be Instruments of their Disaffection to, and Revenge upon such as they hate, not knowing how to come at them by any other Law, being inculpable as to other Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Feb. 13. 1660. One H. H. of T. Ev. in the C. of W. was very active in getting a Warrant against Mr. P. Minister of that Place, and several other Ministers, for not reading Common-Prayer, (while there was an Indulgence in that Point.) He left Order with his Uncle A. H. Constable, that if any such Warrant came in his absence to him, he should speedily execute it: He went that day to G. a Neighbour-Village, and being drunk with one T. C. a debauched Companion of his, coming home, fell from his Horse, and fell down dead in the place.

This

This Judgment of God might have befallen him for his Drunkenness, or he might have escaped it, as many Drunkards do; but his Enmity against his Minister, known to be a worthy good Man, was an Accumulation of his Sins, and a refusing to be taught and reformed by him. What cared such Persons for the Common-Prayer, as it was the Form of Service paid to God? If it had been from Zeal to that, he would have abstained from his scandalous Sins.

June 16. 1661. Mr. B. of E. St. J. said to a Gentleman of Quality, That he would leave never a Horse in his Team, nor Sheep in his Fold, but he would rout out Mr. S. the Minister of the Parish, (who would not comply with Prophaneness) before Harvest, as near as it was, if he did not read Common-Prayer, and that if he were not gone before Harvest, he would be gone himself; God took him at his threatening, for he was gone out of the World before that time came.

June 26. 1661. R. M. of D. and J. B. with other bad Men, had procured the ousting of Mr. J. a very eminent Minister of the Place; M. was heard to say, that the day that J. should go away from D. would be the happiest or merriest day in the Year to him: Upon the very day of Mr. J's going away, M. going with a little empty Cart and one Horse into the Field, the Horse by a strange Providence, drew the Cart over his Leg, which crushed the Bone to pieces, and tore the Flesh from his Thigh, of which Wound he lay in tormenting pain some days after, and then died miserably.

November 21. 1661, The foresaid J. B. of D. in Wilts, the Enemy of Mr. J. of whom he said blasphemously, that J. and his God had cheated the Parish these 14 Years. He had been drinking at Wily, where he threatened, that he would be at a Neighbour Parish to preach next Sunday; meaning that he would execute a Warrant upon some Phanaticks (as he called them) that would hear a neighbour-Minister preach: But riding homeward that Night, he affronted some sober Travellers upon the Road, drew his Sword upon them and made at them, and one of them in his own defence, shot him with a brace of Bullets into the Body, of which Wound he died that day sevensnight. The Gentleman that killed him was tried and acquitted the next Assizes at Sarum.

March 1661. One Thorn of D. who had about that time twelve Month taken a false Oath against the said Mr. J. at the Assize in Sarum, being stricken in the Tongue (as he himself afterwards confessed) before he came out of the Court, which grew worse and worse, and by degrees rotted.

rotted away in his Mouth, till the Worms crawled out; he died desperately and miserably.

Mr. *Lewis Facy* Minister, imprisoned by a *Capias* in *Bodmyn* Goal in *Cornwall*, was no sooner entred, but was railed at, by a violent spirited-Woman in the Prison: He mildly desired her to forbear, kept himself retired, and while he was at Prayer, she came and railed at him, at his Chamber-door, at which she was taken with a Numbness (a Palsy) so that she could not speak nor help her self.

Mr. *Collins* of *Ottery St. Mary* in *Devonshire*, was by the contrivance of a High Constable, apprehended by a Petty Constable, (lodged in the High Constable's House to that purpose) as he

The famous Acts of this Justice B. may be read in a printed Narrative from Devon.

was going to a Funeral, by a Warrant from one Justice B. and H. and put under Guard, and made to pay his Guard, till they carried him to Goal for six Months, for living within five Miles of this Parish. The Head Constable goes out of the way, conveying himself to *Exton*, before Mr. *Collins* was taken. But as near as can be computed the High Constable was taken ill at *Exton*, in the very hour in which the Petty Constable served his Warrant on Mr. *Collins*, and was carried home, the next day died.

Mr. *Thomas Tregosse* relates this following Providence of God, in Mercy and Judgment. In the Lent Assize, at *Exon*, 1670, his Trial was put off, the Deputy-Mayor of *Torrington* attending, who was the grand Enemy. At the next Assizes, the said G. S. Deputy-Mayor, could not attend, and thereby Mr. *Treg.* was acquitted by the Jury. But what hindred or kept his Adversary at home? He had in a drunken Voyage, fallen from his Horse, by which his Shoulder Bone was dislocated, and he became unable to dress or undress himself, and so like to continue to his Death: His Wife, a violent Woman, died of a Tympany (a fearful Spectacle) the Lord's-day Night, after Mr. T. had preached at *Torrington*. One *Denis*, Brother-in-law to *Smith*, who rejoiced at the breaking up of the Conventicle, which he said did him more good, than all his Losses did sadden him; this poor Wretch (said he) did hang himself in his Study, and his Estate forfeited to the Town; this great Judgment befel his Wife, to have her Husband hang himself, and his Estate forfeited, who belched out these Words upon Mr. *Treg.* Hang the Rogue, hang him at the Sign-post, or next Tree, and never send him to *Exon*.

Before ever I saw the Life of the said Mr. *Tregosse* I received the Substance of a Story related in it, from an indifferent hand resident in those

Parts; and because it is exposed in Print already, I shall be the more bold to transcribe it: Mr. T. Ro. a Justice of Peace had committed Mr. Tr. to Prison for three Months; he had not come home out of Prison four days before Mr. Rob. gave out, that he would speedily send him back again to the Place from whence he came. He designed to go to Market to get another Justice of Peace to joyn with him; but before his going thither, he went according to his usual custom, to visit a Tenant's Wife, and in his return, was set upon by his own Bull, which never ran at any one before, which goared him so, that he died of his Wounds.

A Person of Quality too violently acted, and influenced by some of high Dignity, set himself to prosecute the *Nonconformists* that lived within his reach; and one time making a visit to a great Peer, did make too much sport with his Employment, saying, He had been persecuting the Godly Party; and among other Stories, representing them very odiously, he told this Passage, full of Blasphemy (and I doubt not as full of Falshood in those who told it him) in a Prayer, speaking to the Divine Majesty; *Thou art like George on Horse-back, thou seemest to come, but dost not come.* If it had been true and certain such Language had been used, certainly it should not have been repeated with Pleasure. His Coach-man did not make Expedition in bring his Coach to him: then said he, *My Coach-man is like George on Horse-back, he seems to come, but doth not come.* Thus making Sport; but in his return home, he was taken so ill, that he betook himself to his Chamber and in his Bed, and all the Prayers and Tears of his Friends could not prolong his Days, Death made speed and would not tarry.

Now it is time to bring home these Examples and present them to the view, and lay them not at the Doors, but before the Hearts and Consciences of three sorts of Persons, at this time too deeply, if not too heartily engaged in the Suppression of *Nonconforming Protestants*.

1. Those Magistrates that serve the Design.
2. Those of the Clergy that with or approve it.
3. Those Under-Officers and Agents, that go under too dishonourable a Name, in my conceit, to come in the same Page, or stand a-brest in my Division, with Magistrates and Ministers.

1. Of the Magistrates.

Noble and worshipful Gentlemen, I made bold in a former Plea, to address to you on the behalf of my Reverend Brethren, so I call them, because Christians, and because they are Protestants and Divines of Age and Learning: I account their Sufferings to be a great breach upon our

Protestant Body, a weakening of our Strength, a Blot upon our professed Christianity, no Service to the King or Church, but a rejoicing and a Service to their and our professed Enemies: it can be for no Man's Interest, Profit, or Honour to trouble the Servants of Christ, and to provoke his Wrath, which if it be kindled but a little — *Blissed are all they who put their trust in him.*

I may better speak in the Cause of others, than in mine own; and when I plead for them, I really believe, I offer you a Service that should not be despised, but favourably construed, and kindly taken; for I do warn you to have nothing to do with the Ruine of just, good, peaceable, holy, learned Men and Christians, and the King's good Subjects, yea, and some of your best Friends; for I do believe, they make many Prayers to God for you, to turn your Hearts, to save your Souls; and their Intercessions for you, are as one piece of Defence between you and harm. If these are my Mistakes, I am mistaken; and if I am altogether mistaken, I beseech you pardon the Mistake, and accept the Affection, Respect, Honour, and Good-will I bear you; for I would serve you without a Mistake if I could. But verily, I think, I am pretty right in my Judgment of this Case; and have the concurrent sense of some of them, or of their Relations, who have been active in the same way in which you now appear.

You are not all of a Mind and Temper; you act from various Dispositions or Habits of Mind; and these are as various, as those observed by that antient Christian-Cicero, *Laetantius*, of the Prosecutors of the Christians. *Accepta enim Potestate pro suis moribus quisque sevit* — ‘Some for too great a fear, have ventured to do more than they were commanded: Others out of a private Hatred of their own against just Men; some from a natural Cruelty of their own; some that they might please, and by this Office (or Service) prepare (or secure) a way for their Advancement; some ran headlong to kill, as one of *Phrygia*, who burnt all the People with the Conventicle or Meeting-place it self, (*Laetan. de Justitia*. l. 5. c. 11. p. 490. *Lugd. Bat.* 1660.) Thus Men were moved of old. From what of these Principles or Affections they now move, concerns them to enquire, before that measure which they mete to others, be measured to them again. Generous Minds should be locked up against the Intrusion of Temptation, to bring in such low Affections as these are, by which a Christian Heart is more prophaned than the Temple was by *Paul's* bringing in of the *Gentiles* into it; these are too base Affections for such as hope for Heaven.

You say we have a Law, and according to that the *Nonconformists* ought to suffer, and you are empowered to execute the Laws indifferently.

This

This was the strained Pretence of the *Jews* to be so urgent with *Pilate* to crucify our Saviour; *John 19. 7. We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to dy:* Whereas he ought not to have been accounted a Blasphemer, in saying, He was the Son of God, for he was so; and if he had been a Blasphemer, by which of their Laws did they cry, *Crucify, crucify him?* Give me leave I beseech you to speak freely. I have not in all my Narratives touch'd upon any that I know now to have his Sword drawn in this fresh Assault; but have related things past to be your Admonitions and Examples, that I may not provoke, but profit you.

I grant you have a Law, and I believe many of you do wish there were no such Law, and many are weary and cautious, sparing and fair in the Execution of it. But I beseech you once again to keep to the Scope of the Law, and to the Law it self, as relating to the Scope, and there will be no need of Tumults to guard any of your Persons to find out and disperse the Meetings, nor such fear of you from the Nonconformists. That Preaching and Praying which contains matter of Sedition, Rebellion and Insurrection, and is expressly of that nature without forced and uncharitable Construction, or perverted illogical Inferences, are the only Exercises under the name of *Religious Exercises*, which you can justly punish. Reading Scripture, singing Psalms are Religious Exercises, and the matter of them undoubtedly godly. Preaching and Praying are as undoubtedly God's Ordinances, as the Scripture is God's Word: It is as manifest Impiety to forbid these, any of these, or all of these in one Assembly, as it would be to obliterate any part of Holy Writ, or to cancel any Divine Law. It is Impiety, and not to be supposed that any Christian Legislators should make a Law to prohibit any Religious Duty or Exercise in it self considered; and if any of you think you may punish Preachers or Hearers, for such undoubted Religious Exercises, you sin against God; and all the Laws in the World cannot justify your so doing, for no Law of Man can defend any Man in sinning against the Law of God.

It is true that the Preface of a Law is not a Law, and the Scope of the Law is not the Law; but as the Scope of the Law expressed in the Preface, was the Reason and Intention of the Law-maker; and all the general Words in the Law, were formed with reference to the Scope (or else they were not made as rational Means conducing to its Ends, no more than it would be to forbid speaking, that there might be no swearing). Any Exercise of Religion, that tends to Sedition, Rebellion, and to move Insurrection, is so far punishable, as it is abused and perverted to that unsufferable End; or else you punish Religious Duties absolutely taken, because by such Numbers, or by Persons above sixteen Years of Age, in such Numbers; and then you'll say, it is not religious

Duties that is punished, but the prohibited number, of above four besides the Family. But then again, the number absolutely taken doth not make a Crime, or should not, but as it is supposed to foment Sedition. For, why shall it be unlawful for twenty, forty, or a hundred of divers Families to meet in one Place for Religious Exercises, any more than for some noble and great Family, of some one Noble-Man or Gentleman, or Boarding-house, which hath so many Persons in it, to meet together in one Room for Religious Duties?

Besides this, it is clear that the Clauses in the Act against Conventicles, refers to Such an Assembly as is prohibited in the beginning of the Act: for these words, *Such Offender, so convicted, such Offence, like Offence, such Meeting, such Conventicle*, is repeated twelve or thirteen times in the body of the Act. Now *such* relates to a Meeting before described and forbidden; *Such Meeting* we find in the beginning of it. The Act is for providing further and more speedy Remedies against growing and dangerous Practises of seditious Sectaries, and other disloyal Persons, who under pretence of tender Consciences, have, or may at their Meetings contrive Insurrections.

Be it enacted. &c. *That if any Person of the Age of sixteen Years, or upwards, being a Subject of this Realm — shall be present at any Assembly, Conventicle or Meeting (mark the words) [under colour or pretence] of any Exercise of Religion, in other manner than according to the Liturgy, and Practice of the Church of England, in any place within the Kingdom of England, Dom. W. or T. of B. upon T. at which Conventicle there shall be five Persons or more, over and besides those of the same Household; or if it be in a House, Field, or place where is no Family inhabiting, Then where any five Persons or more assembled as aforesaid; It shall and may be lawful to and for any one or more Justices of Peace upon Proof of such Offence—. Which Proof is either by Confession of the Party, or Oath of two Witnesses — or notorious Evidence and Circumstance of the Fact, to make Record, &c.*

Will you cut off the Act from the Preface? or have you no regard to the words of the Act, *under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion?* then you take no notice of the Description of the Persons who make up an unlawful Assembly or Conventicle. Here are three things to make a Conventicle. 1. The Persons, Number and Age, called *seditious Sectaries, and disloyal Persons*. 2. An Assembly of above four of these, under colour and pretence of any Exercise of Religion, over and above the Family.

Where observe, 1. What is implied or suspected, (nay, it must be evident, because it must be proved by Witnesses, or Confession of the Party,

or

or notorious Evidence or Circumstances of the Fact) that some ill Contrivance is carrying on, *under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion.*

2. It is said, *any Exercise of Religion*, that is, as I conceive any particular Duty, as reading a Chapter, singing Psalms, as well as Preaching, Praying, administering Sacraments, or Discipline: whereby it is clear, the Law forbids not any Exercise, no not preaching in it self, but *the colour and pretence of it*, in clear and express words.

3. *In other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England.* The meaning of which is ambiguous, and commonly interpreted, if any Exercise of Religion be without the Liturgy, and then it is ambiguous, to say, *in other manner than*, &c. when the meaning is, without the Liturgy. The Nonconformists have no other manner of Reading, Singing, &c. than is usual in the Practice of the Church of England, nor other manner of Preaching, than what is practised in the Church of England. This is the meeting of such ill Persons, that abuse Religion as a colour and pretence, to conceal desperate and pernicious Practices in any other manner than according to the Liturgy. And *such Persons, such Offences, such Meetings so convicted*, are subject to such Penalties.

Now then Gentlemen, keep to the Laws, and spare none. But then consider; why have any acted so, as to make no difference between seditious Sectaries and disloyal, and peaceable loyal Persons? why have they not distinguished, as the Act doth, between any substantial, innocent Religion, and the colour or pretence of it? but taking it in the lump, it hath been punished, without inquiry after the Leaven of Sedition that leavened the Lump.

I do heartily wish this may fall into the Hands, and upon the Heart of that Minister of Justice, who drawing out Evidence from an impudent Informer, to prove an Information, asked him this Question, *Was there Preaching there?* If the Informer could have truly sworn, that there was Preaching there; let the Examiner, as one that shall be judged in the great day, think before-hand, how Preaching (not tainted with Sedition, or tending to any Evil to the State) deserved to come in as a Crime, or the Preacher punishable for it. Certainly Preaching should be judged a Duty encourageable and not punishable in a Christian Judicature. It should be harsh to a Christian Ear, to hear Preaching, *an Ordinance of God, and the Power of God to Salvation*, enquired after as a Crime! I wish God may not lay it to any Magistrate's Charge, You have fined and imprisoned my Servants, for preaching and hearing my Word; and I wish that every such one may judg himself for it, and repent before he go to God's Judgment.

Why have any punished the singing of a Psalm in a Meeting, which was in the Metre and Tune practised by the Church of *England*? Why, when the Informer being present, and making the fifth Man, have the rest suffered as a Conventicle, there being but four above the Family, and the Informer the fifth?

Is there no way to execute a Law, but by a violation of the Law? What Law is there for tearing up Free-Holds, pulling down Houses, tearing up Seats? Which looks like a Rout or Riot? a Company of Boys and rude Fellows, some with Swords, and others with Staves and Clubs about the Streets, to break up Meetings of Men without Arms, and Women and Children? What Law is there for executing Warrants on the Lord's-Day? There is one against it. What Law is there for Justices to give out Warrants, that lie dormant in Officers hands, empowering them to break up Meetings that are foreseen, or foretold to be? What Law requires a Justice to be an Informer? to break open Doors at unseasonable Hours, to fright Women with Child, and others into Fits, when there is not so much as any notorious Evidence or Circumstance, much less Oath of any Witness or Witnesses?

Now let us come to the Proof; What is a notorious Evidence or Circumstance of Fact? Of what Fact? Of any Religious Exercise without the Liturgy; that's the Fact: Now what is the notorious Evidence of it? Not a Tone, nor a Voice, nor such a Number; not Preaching, nor any other Exercise of Religion, can be notorious in it self, that it is such a Fact, but to them that are present at it. Such Exercise may be, and yet not differing from the manner of the Church, by its own Evidence, but to him or them to whom it is evident upon the place, or by Oath of two Witnesses. But why shall two infamous Witnesses carry it from the contrary Testimony of more than two, and more credible? Because it is for the King? No Lie, nor Perjury, nor Oppression of the King's Subjects, is for the King, but against his Honour, Wealth, and Strength. Why will Magistrates employ, set on, and encourage infamous and known lying Fellows? How can they believe them, that were not Witnesses, nor present in the Meeting from the beginning to the end, but lay skulking at a distance, that went scouting up and down; that took Names upon Trust and Hear-say; and that cannot tell the Text, nor one Sentence of the Sermon, nor who the Preacher was?

Here Regard is to be had to the Credibility of Persons on both sides: Are there not as honest, just, consciencious Persons as Informers? I hope, I know there are; why may not they be believed, and the Parties relieved upon their Appeals? Is it a sufficient Reason, because they swear for the King? If for the King as a Party, then Judges judg between Party and
Party,

Party, and in doing Justice against the King's Cause as a Party, they establish his Throne as a King, and thereby act for him. If it be for the King's Profit, it supposes the Right to lie on his Side first, or else it is no Profit, but a Worm in his Exchequer. What other Reason is there why these Witnesses must be believed? Is it because they swear positively in the Affirmative? Because some that construe Things in their favour, do take this for a Rule, that a Negative cannot be proved, therefore their positive Swearing cannot be disproved? I do think it worthy a few Words to explain it, which may help Mens Understanding: therefore I say, A Negative cannot be proved, because it is grounded (pardon the Word) upon a Non-entity; that is, There is no such thing; therefore such a thing cannot be affirmed and proved. Truth is the positive in Being and Reality, and therefore Truth can only be affirmed. In a Contradictory, one Side can only be true. If one Man swear a Lie never so positively, he positively swears a Negative or a Privative: He that swears the Truth, tho it be contrary to an affirmative Falshood, or Lie, swears a Positive. Now when an Informer, or any other Witness, swears positively so and so, and another swears the contrary, the Judge and Jury, (who are Judges of Evidence) must know, that he that swears Truth, he only swears the Positive, and the other the Negative; and therefore in this case they must use their Reason, to compare the Credit of the Persons that swear on both Sides; and if there be an equality in them, they must have regard to Circumstances, and find out what Evidence they can. Let Juries take heed of the Guilt of a *false Verdict*, when they are tempted and deceived, that it is for the King: They are to proceed according to the Credit of the Evidence; and then it is for the King, when they proceed according to Truth: Then you are Loyal Subjects, when you act according to Law, for Law is the Rule of Loyalty.

It is too apparent, that too many now do study, by what Laws Protestants may be brought into Trouble: as *Lactantius* reports, that *Domitius* (*Ulpianus de Officio Proconsulis, lib. 7.*) *rescripta nefaria collegit, ut doceretur quibus pœnis affici oporteret eos, qui se cultores Dei confiterentur.* [*De Justitiis, lib. 5. p. 491.*]

Honoured Sirs, you have a Law, and Laws; keep strictly to them, and do not your selves transgress them: You have Laws against others; keep to those Laws, and you will not give Dissenters such just cause to complain, as they have. You have Laws, and you have a Religion too, in great danger from the Execution of them at this time, and in the usual manner, if the Judgment of a great part of them, who had Ability to judge, and Power to declare their Judgments; be of any value: You have

have a Law, but keep to your Places, lest you give great advantage to them that complain of illegal Sufferings.

Many of you do not like the Laws, but besides the Law, there is a Penalty, and an hundred Pounds will make a Hole in some Justices Estates, especially in Towns and Cities, who are Tradesmen: But keep strictly to the Laws, to these Laws, and you may venture your Penalty. If you were not too forward, or too fearful, the Informers would fear to come to your Houses, as Men afraid to be sent to the House of Correction, or a Goal; and you may easier defeat them, than they recover a Forfeiture upon you, with all their Arts of Falshood and Perjury: But if you value your Forfeiture, above the preservation of the Protestant Religion, in a great part of it, how will you be able to suffer the Loss of all against Popery?

And lastly; Consider seriously the manifold Manifestations of God in these Things: The Judgments of God are rarely and seldom executed, because of his Patience and Mercy; but they are sometimes, that they may be noted, and that Men may fear. *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth.*

This may be called *Fanaticism*, and vain Observations of weak and superstitious Minds: But as it is a Contempt of God, not to observe his Providences, and his Judgments; so Christians in all Ages, have made and given Observations of God's Hand stretched out against them that have persecuted his People, or helped forward their Affliction.

You know how unwillingly *Pontius Pilate* was drawn to deliver our Saviour. Who ever accounted *Ger. Jo. Vossius* below the most learned of his Age? He gives this Censure of *Pilate's Act*, (*Harmon. Evang.* l. 2. c. 5. p. 246.) *Cujus injustitiæ graves à Deo pœnas luit*: For he who suffered himself to be carried with the Accusations of the Jews, which he knew to be false, so far as to adjudg innocent Christ to Punishment; he also himself, circumvented with the false Accusations of the Jews, was banished to *Vienna*; as *Josephus*, *Lib.* 18. of his *Antiq.* c. 7. Neither did *Herod* escape unpunished, who professed he found nothing worthy of Death in Christ, for his cruel handling of him; for he was (tho for a far different Cause) by *Caligula* banished unto *Lions*. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 18. c. 25.

This might be sufficient to discourage any from being forward, or inciting and promoting this Work, either by Threats or Promises, and to make the unwilling resolute in their Averseness and Forbearance. He that said, *Remember Lot's Wife*, doth expect that all Men should read what God's hand writes upon Examples, and declares by his Publick Judgments. *Trinillian* observes to *Scapula*, the Publick Judgments of God for the Persecution of the Christians; such as not gathering their Harvests, the former

mer Years Rain, and the Fires which hung over the City of Carthage all the Night; they knew what they threatned, who saw them, and what the Thunders sounded: *Omnia hæc sunt im-*

minentis iræ Dei signa. 'These are all Signs of the Wrath of God hanging over our Heads: 'And they shall feel the universal and last or ut- *Nec unquam impio-*
rum scelere in nostrum
nomen exurgitur, ut non
statim divinitus vin-
dicta comitetur, &c.
'most Wrath of God, who do otherwise inter-
'pret these Examples of his: For that Sun in *Cyprianus contra De-*
metrianum.
'the Assembly at *Utica*, when the Light was al-
'most put out, was a Prodigy, and could not be
'from any ordinary Eclipse, being then in its

'Altitude: — We can also lay before thee the latter Ends of several Pre-
'sidents, who near their Death have remembered that they sinned, in vexing
'the Christians. *Vigellius Saturninus*, who first drew Sword against us,
'lost his Eye-sight. *Claudius Terminus* in *Cappadocia*, taking it ill his
'Wife turned to our Sect, dealt cruelly with the Christians, was in his
'Palace destroyed alone by Pestilence, after that Lice had creep'd from
'him while alive. *Let no Man know this*, said he, (keep this secret) *lest*
'the Christians rejoyce in their Hope. — And they who seem to themselves to
'be unpunished, shall come into the Judgment of God. Thus that ancient
Writer, *Tertullian*.

Ecclesiastical Historians do not pass by particular Judgments upon particular Persons, nor general Calamities, such as Darknes upon the Face of the Earth, the Noise of Thunder, not from Heaven, but the roaring of the Earth, Earthquakes, opening of the Ground, swallowing up Houses, and many died with the *Centur. 4. cap. 20.*
Terror of it; Cities drowned and overthrown by the Sea, the Pestilence, and other Calamities. Hath not God called us to turn to him by many Judgments? And is this a Sign of our turning to him, that Religion is exposed to Scorn, and truly religious Men are least endured; and Dissenters from Humane Inventions, and unnecessary Things, are prosecuted; and Dissenters from God, and his plain and open Laws, and the very serious Profession of Christianity, are too commonly spared? Is this the Effect of our Repentance? Yea, what Zeal against Dissenting Christians to root them up, to punish Preaching, Praying, singing Psalms, mutual Edification expressly exhorted to by the Apostle, *Col. 3. 16.* And instead of Christian Communication and Converse, what a lewd Generation of *Dammum's*, that Health-Prosperity, and Destruction to Persons, according to their Interests and Passions? The professed Devotees of prophane Observances and Irreligion carry the Day, and keep the Wall, while sober and religious Persons are driven into Corners, and can-

not enjoy them with quiet. We have heard of Swords, and Blood drawn at Play-Houses, or by occasion of them; and was ever any of them indicted for Riots? But how common a Practice hath it been to indict peaceable Men and Women, and bind them to the Behaviour, for undoubted Christian Exercises?—God hath spoken by Wars with a Nation of our own Profession, by Pestilence, by many dreadful Fires, by raging Fevers, and other Diseases not commonly known, in which God hath not long debated with wretched Mortals, but taken them away suddenly. He hath contended by great Decays in Mens Estates, by hideous Darknels, by scorching consuming Heat; and lastly, by pouring down immoderate Rains, (will neither Fire melt us, nor Rain soften us, no, not so much as into one Fast?) And is this a sign that God is attended to, and his Voice understood, and his Warning taken, that the Mouths of his Servants shall be stopp'd? And what tho God hath remembred Mercy, in giving us great Plenty, after both excessive Heat and immoderate Rains; doth not he expect to be entreated, and that we should amend our Ways? Shall this go for a Reformation, that they who cannot serve God in a publick Station, shall not serve him in private Meetings? Or that a more plain Way of Worship shall not be endured in publick? And many who for fashion sake cry up the Publick Service, do not live by it; and severely punish others for not coming to Church, who are not so often there themselves as they might be.

Be pleased but to look about you, and see how many Gentlemen are either cut off, or taken away: How many Noble and Gentlemen's Families are fatherless and masterless! Houses shut up, or

— *Quanto major fuerit
persecutionis injuria, tan-
to & justior fiat & gra-
vior pro persecutione vin-
dicta.* Cyprian. contra
Demetrian.

*Ruinis regum, jactu-
ris opum, dispendio mi-
litarum, diminutione ca-
strorum* — Idem ib.

a Passage in at the Back and Kitchen-Doors, into a cold Kitchen, and an empty House! And do you think this is the way to live long upon Earth, and bring down a Blessing upon your selves, and your Posterity, to discountenance or to extirpate the Professors of Christian Religion? Could but the Dead advise you, they would advise you to be truly pious, and piously zealous, to encourage them that mind the Way to Heaven, and to hedg up their Way with Thorns, that transgress, and are extravagant out of the Ways of God: They

would tell you, that many that keep the other Side of the Thorn-Hedg, (to use the Words of an eminent Guide in that Way) do meet at the Journey's End. But the Dead speak not; and it will be too late, your Work will be done, before you can go to advise with them. O hearken to the Voice of God in his Word, in his Judgments, in your many Examples,

and

and in your own Consciences! Can you discern a Judgment of God, when you see it at another Man's Door? Must it come in at your own Doors? must it come up Stairs? must it come to your Bed-Chamber? and must it hinder the Success of all Physicians upon you, and follow you to your Graves, before you take a reverent Notice of it.

I beseech you be not displeased with me for telling you what I think: The Curse of disobedient Children, the Curse of Swearing and Drunkenness, and many other Impieties; the Curse of Poverty, and Necessity to mangle, if not to alienate Estates, comes into many Houses, because they would not have the Blessing of *Obed-Edom*, by entertaining the Ark of God: And do not you in your Consciences know, (if ever you do reflect) that they only, or for the most part, who have bent their Power against Nonconformists, have made but a Pretence of the Church, to disguise their natural Disgust, or close Displeasure against the Practice of religious Duties: For till a Man's own Heart be persuaded and converted to God, he doth not well digest Religion in any other; and indeed he can no more love it in others, than condemn himself; for he must needs condemn the Neglect in himself, that commends the Practice in another. Have you known the most pious and sober Persons, of the most unswayed Reason, to be forward and eager? Have you not traced the Pipes, that have conveyed the Oil of Interest to feed this burning Zeal? Name but one Man that hath stood upon his own Legs, without dependance or expectation; name but one Man, that was wise, sober, temperate, serious, and consciencious in the Practice of Religion, in his own Conversation, and in his Family, that was incoherent from some in Power for their own worldly Aims, that offered himself to this Work: Name but any one that did execute these Laws from a pure Heart to please God, and advance his Honour; and for that one, you may suspect many others, if not know your selves, to act from a private, worldly, if not revengeful Spirit.

Have you not known that Men have taken their Aims and Measures from the Wills of some in higher place? and that have cried up, or beaten down Religion, as it hath opened their way, or stood in it to their designed Projects? The Spring of these violent Motions is as apparent as the *Gnomon* of the Dial, to the Eyes of all those that see what time of day it is. I have been sparing of Names, because I would not offend; yet for warning and example sake, be pleased to observe what they have done and been, that have gone before you: Do you take your selves to be more eminently Loyal than all that are laid aside? Do you think it will be a meritorious Service to suppress Dissenters, else you can be no Friends to *Cæsar*, no Sons of the Church? But who is the *Cæsar*, or which is the

Church, for whose sake Protestants must be undone? Not the King, nor the Church of *England*. This is your time of acting your parts. There is as great Reason to be shie and tender in Execution of Laws against Dissenters, as to be severe and zealous for other Laws. Take heed! for God is concerned, you, and your Families and Posterities concerned; and as you must account to God, abuse not the Power given you, to serve any Man's Pleasure, or your own corrupt Affections. Take Example by some of as mean Parts as Estates, who have been recommended to Power by for their Forwardness in such Services as these, and have not had the Honour and Comfort of living in their own Houses, yet have been busy in opening, and breaking into, and rifling their religious Neighbours; and by others of large Estates and Fortunes, who eat their Commons not dress'd in their own Kitchens, and have not common Liberty, but what they ask leave, and pay for. Take warning by some, who have run but a very short Race and Course in the pursuit of Dissenters, and have left none of their Children to succeed them in their Power. Take the Example of them, who have seen the Hand of God stretched out against them and their Families, and whose Consciences have applied the meaning of it in the Death of their Children, both of their *Reubens* and *Benjamins*; and that have not prospered in this World, but have fled, and hid, lived and died in a Place that hath no Mark of Honour upon it, but that it is entitled to be the Kings. *Elias* was as great a Fanatick, and Disturber of *Israel*, as any Nonconformist now: Chuse you, Noble Sirs, to be *Obadiab's*, rather to hide the Prophets of the Lord by Fifty, than be either a Captain of a Fifty, or one of the Fifty, that go to take the Prophets: Every one those unhappy Captains had an Authority as high as yours can be: But *Obadia* could distinguish between a Prophet and a Rebel, a faithful Preacher, and a State-Disturber, and of all the Captains he was preserved. And so I do heartily pray, that you may be in your Spheres a Terror to evil Doers, and a Praise to them that do well; and so Death and Judgment will be no Terror to you, and you shall have Praise of God: Spare no Teacher of Sedition, but honour them that fear the Lord.

II. I crave leave to write a few Words to my Brethren in the Holy Ministry.

Reverend and beloved Fathers and Brethren, I am not unsensible of my unfitness to write to you, both in respect of my own Inability, and your Prejudice against me. I fear my Charity to my Reverend and worthy Brethren the Nonconformists, have lost me much of yours. I am sorry that
any

any have so little of this Oil, that they have not enough for them and me too : But I will adventure to open my Mind a little to you, tho it be the less. I do humbly conceive the Word of Reconciliation is committed to us, and the Holy-Ghost is invocated upon us more than once ; and those Graces which all Christians have, we should have more abundantly, and should be as well known by that Grace, by which our Saviour would have his Disciples to be known of all Men, by loving one another, as we are known by our distinguishing Garbs and Habits. We can speak at large of the Excellency of Love and Peace, and of the ill Effects of Enmity and Dissention ; and represent and inveigh against Schism, as if that were the Sin against the Holy-Ghost, which shall never be forgiven in this World, nor in that which is to come, or as if that were the Sin unto Death : And indeed it may be called a *Sin unto Death*, in a sence, because it is so contrary to Charity and Peace, and destructive of the Life of Saints, which doth much consist in their Communion. But were we impartial, we should as warmly admonish our own Hearts, to take heed of Schismatical Passions, and excommunicate them from within us, as admonish and cast out others that differ from us. Is there not some Fondness for our own Opinions, and Self-Love in the Praise of Unity, and Reproof of Schism ? For most of the Discourses I have heard or read of late Years upon this great Subject, have been to condemn or censure all that differ from us. We would have all Men think, not only charitably, but well and honourably of us : but if we have any Charity for them that are out, we are very careful that it be done in secret, and without sound of Trumpet. I am far from extending this to all the Conforming Brethren, but to them, and them only, who from Mis-information received an obstinate Prejudice, or Policy, are profuse in the Expence of Words and Passions. We do take it extreme ill from some Nonconformists, that they censure and speak ill of us, that they revile, and render us as scandalous and odious, as ready to decline and apostatize ; but really are not the hottest of them matched, if not beaten out of the Field ? I may be thought to have an Intimacy with them, and a Partiality for them, whereas my Acquaintance is very little ; but as far as it doth extend, I must do them this Justice, that they are of a very loving, healing, and uniting Spirit. I have heard them speak very well of good Conformists, and as free to acknowledge the Grace of God in them, as in those of their own Persuasion, and as ready to hold Terms of Friendship with us. Have not we given them as great Offence, by doing what they cannot do, as they have given us, by not doing what we have done ? they have lost by our Compliance, but we have not lost by their Non-

*See the second Sermon
of the Right Reverend
Bishop of Cork, of In-
vective Preaching.*

conformity ;

conformity, except, as they are often told, we lose by their means among the People, but we gain among the Princes by it; and do we love them so ill, that we would not have the People love them? Alas! what a peckled Bird is a Nonconformist in a Princes Court, and in most noble Families, at a publick Meeting! What! is a little Popularity grudg'd them? I am griev'd to think what a Crime it is to be consciencious. Certainly, if they are not consciencious, they have not common Sense; and the opprobrious Jeers and Sarcasms with which they have been treated, have not sufficiently set out their Folly, if they suffered great Losses, to gain the cold Breath of Popularity, which would sooner starve than refresh them. Who should be so compassionate, courteous, officious, loving and peaceable towards them, as we who are Ministers? Who should better know the Darknes and Weakness, the various Workings of the Mind, than we? Who should more candidly use them that dissent from us, than we, who know our many Dissents from our selves, at several times, and the same Points? Who should allow more to the scrupulous than we, who know the Weakness of our own Light, and ascribe much to the Authority of Conscience? Conscience is no Sovereign, but Conscience is next and immediatly under Christ the King. Conscience is subject to Mistakes, but its Judgment is of highest Authority next under God, and to be controlled by none but him. It is Hypocrisy and Impiety to pretend it; and it is too great a Boldness, and Intrusion into the Throne of God, to judg that they do but pretend Conscience: And very ill Service is done to Christianity, and great Encouragement is given to Impiety, by some Mens arrainging Dissenters for a bare pretence of Conscience, by making the dissolute act as securely, as if there were really no such Power

It is suspicious, that some Mens Conformity is ill built, who say, That a Claim of Conscience is not to be allowed; as if Inferiors were to lay that aside, or we can never attain to Peace; as if that were to be resign'd up to Rulers.

as that of Conscience. Is it not a Word too common, *Hang 'em, bang 'em, there is none good, no Trust to be given to Men that pretend to Conscience?* Who should better understand what Unity and Consent is necessary between Christians, and what Condescension and Forbearance is necessary? Who should better understand the differing Practices of ancient Churches, than we? And that there is no perfect Unity, till we come to perfect Light and Grace? We should know that there are hard things in Conformity. Subscription and Conformity is the easiest thing in the World, if there were no more required, than that they will not rebell, but support the Government, and be peaceable under it: If this be all, tell them plainly, in these or like plain Words, and then see if they will refuse.

But

But to impose upon us Maxims of State, the Determination of Problems, is to bring many Men into the Clouds, tho others get near the Sun, and have Light enough to read their meaning. We shou'd know the Education of a Scholar, the Charge of Studies, the Necessities of Families, and how harsh a thing it is to be too much indebted to Charity since all things have ceased to be common. We should upon many Considerations commiserate them, and their Families. We should be hospitable, and not forgetful to entertain Strangers. How comes it then to pass, that it is such a Crime in some Mens Eyes, to be courteous to a dissenting Brother? and his very Neighbourhood is become intolerable, especially if he preach the Word?

In a word, as I said before, we that preach the *Word of Reconciliation*, should be of reconcileable Spirits and Tempers. Proud and erroneous Pharisees were given to cast out of Synagogues. It is a Sectarian Spirit, to make Sects, or to use a sound Christian as if he were a Sectary. The Spirit of Sanctification is necessary to all that will be saved, and for us more than others: We declare we have received that Spirit before Ordination, when the Holy-Ghost is invoked, and we are sent with Authority from him.

Give me leave to bring to your Minds the excellent Words of Cyprian. — *Idcirco & in columba venit Spiritus Sanctus, simplex animal & latum, non felle amarum, non morsibus seivum, non unguium laceratione violentum: Hospitibus humana diligere, unius domus consortium nosse, cum generant, simul filios edere; cum commeant, volantibus invicem coherere; communi conversatione vitam suam degere, oris oscula concordiam pacis agnoscere, lege circa omnia unanimitatis implere.* — *Quid facit in pectore Christiano luporum feritas, & canum rabies, & venenum lethale serpentum, & cruenta savitia bestiarum?* — He speaks of the Catholick Church, in that excellent Book, *De Simplicitate Prelatorum*.

Barbarity and Cruelty rages in the Wilderness without the Church: How unbecoming a Scholar, yea, a Man? a Minister, yea, a Christian; is it, to imbitter the Lives of them that are cast out of their Churches, and Houses, and Free-Holds, and cast down to be trampled under foot? To exasperate Magistrates against them! Is it to our Honour to put on the Magistrates Spurs? Is Whispering and Backbiting a Grace in us? Are Invectives, Sermons? I do not marvel that some Men do not pray before their Sermons, when I consider what their Sermons have been; but do much more marvel, that after their Sermons they have repeated an excellent Prayer out of the Common-Prayer, *That the Word might sink into our Hearts, &c.*

There are two Things which are taken exceeding ill from you, by conforming Gentlemen, and Members of our Church: Your meddling with State-Affairs in the Pulpit, and your exciting the Magistrates to prosecute Protestants; by which you do not save your selves, nor gain others. Have not some of you driven away, and lost your own Auditors, by your Invectives against Protestant Nonconformists of longer standing in the Church of Christ, and that have gone through those Trials, and stood fast, which you have not felt as yet, and whom you ought to honour as Fathers and Brethren? It can never be a comfortable Day to you, if you lived to see them all used as you would have them used. How unworthy a thing is it in a Minister, to go next way to a Magistrate, and inform and incense him against your Brethren, (so you should esteem them) for a private Discourse, which had nothing of Danger, but some pleasantness in it! Some have been sensible of this afterwards, and ashamed. How zealous an Act is it in a Minister, to importune a Magistrate, time after time, to drive Minister out of his own Family, out of a Town, or into a Prison? Must that Man be clear in his own Soul, that cannot abide the Neighbourhood of a Nonconformist, because he thinks himself condemned by his Resolution and Constancy? Whether was the more Christian Act and Temper, to molest a Nonconformist living, or to beg his Pardon dying; for an unfriendly, uncharitable, perfidious Carriage? How uncomfortable is it for a Minister, to disturb, and procure the Punishment of a few dissatisfied Persons, by which they are cut off from him, and grow and propagate? They encrease, and he grows more discontented and troublesome, and in his declining Age outlives their Love, and his own Honour, not among them alone; and to sink and fall in the Esteem and Honour, which once he had out of the Confines of his own Parish; and his Labours, once esteemed, are become fruitless. I do not know, that kindling of Fires is any part of the Office of an Evangelical Priest. I conceal Names, and proceed no further.

Some of you are zealous for the Laws, for all, and for a full Obedience of all Persons to all Laws: But, my Brethren, as going to Law is the last Remedy to be used by an injured Person; so *omnia prius tentanda*, by us, in Cases wherein we may appeal to, or call in the Assistance of the Law. Have we stated the Differences? have we argued with the Spirit of Love with them? have we prayed to God for them? Have we given no just Offence, either by bitterness or negligence? Have we become all things to them, to gain them? After all means, have we exercised Forbearance? and begun with the first Offices of Love, and then risen higher and higher? But as soon as Men come into a divided Parish, to present them, or complain to Justices, is to begin where we should not end without

extreme

extreme unwillingness and trouble. Our Master never taught us this Method of Proceeding. To correct by Warrants, is not edifying and converting. It is commonly said, That Executioners of the Law are to act, and not to judg, or use their own Discretion: No! why then what's the reason that wise and discreet Men are at any time put into Office?

I have answered what Objections I met with before; I shall but touch one common Grievance, which is, (besides the general Accusation of Schism and Separation, and other Matters of Debate) that either some of your Parishioners go abroad to hear, or some of the Nonconformist Preachers preach in your Parishes. In this Case there are abundance of Circumstances, that aggravate or diminish, and by consequence alter it. If the Nonconformist Minister be an able good Man, I think we should be glad and thankful for his Pains, and live (as in some very great Places some eminent Conformists and Nonconformists do) in great Love and Agreement, and both are edified in Love. You know, *St. Paul* rejoiced that Christ was preached, tho out of Envy to him. But hath Necessity brought Preachers among us, or carried away careful Souls from us? then who is most to blame? Suppose there were two Churches in your Town, you are not grieved that all hear you not in that Case. I know the great Conveniency of Parish-Bourds, both for Ministers and People, especially where Parishes are thick; and People should be tender how they leave a painful profitable Parish-Minister sent unto them: And I have heard, some Nonconformist Preachers have persuaded People to hear them; and Nonconformist Hearers, that could not in Conscience forsake good Men, if they had such in their Parishes. Others are of another Temper, weak, and subject to Passions. But in this Case, as I should labour conscienciously to be a profitable Minister; so I should not be a Hindrance to the greater Profit of Souls elsewhere; I should not think them to be lost to me, that are gained to Christ by another Minister. But this Complaint is made against some Conforming Ministers, that they draw too. The Answer was home and blunt, of a Conforming Preacher, either given or sent to a Neighbour-Minister, who was aggrieved his People left him, and went to the Neighbour-Minister: *I preached them hither, and let him preach them home again, if he will.* If our Hearts were set upon our Work, and if God's Glory was uppermost, and Self-denial nourished, these things would be better born. The Dissenters are either peaceable in their Dissents, modest in their different Opinions, sincere in their Ways; or they are of a Sectarian Spirit: To the one the Spirit of Meekness, Love, Forbearance, is best suited, and we may live together with Comfort and Edification; to the other, Severity is an improper Cure, for it makes him the more a Sectary. We are to gain, and to gather, and to use all Means that are

proper, and effective of that End. Are there not in all our Parishes, ignorant, profane, careless Sectaries from God, and his holy Body? What Imprudence would it be, to bring them all under Fines and Troubles? They should be a greater Grief to us, undoubtedly, than honest scrupulous Suls, that seek the way to please God. If Nonconformity be such an Eyr-fore, let us take heed that we do not make Nonconformists, and not blame them so much as our selves, if they seek to mend themselves elsewhere. It is certain, *High Conformists made Nonconformists, in 1662.* And it is too evident, that Conformists do make many still. I am persuaded, if St. *Augustin* had been alive in our Days, he would never have persuaded the Magistrate to make such Laws, nor any of the Fathers before him, much less the holy Apostles; their Salutations expressed the Largeness of their Hearts, and their Catholick Love to the *Corinthians*, among whom were great Divisions; to the *Galatians* and *Colossians*, among whom were some very erroneous: So did their Benedictions; *Peace be to the Brethren, and Love, with Faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Ephes. 6. 23. *And Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity.* vers. 2. But to love the Nonconformists into Silence, into Poverty, into Disgrace, into Bonds, is a Love not known to be numbred among the Characters and Signs of Christian Love. If Christ died for them, if any of them love Christ in Sincerity, love them better for Christ's sake; and let not Conformity be a necessary Condition of private Charity, as well as of Ministerial Liberty and Maintenance: (I know it is not so to all, some have Hearts and Hands extended, but.) I speak to them whose Zeal, or something else, makes them strait and rigorous. Would you love them if they would conform? Why do you not love some that have conformed, but not above Conformity, after your Pattern and Example? Do you say, it would not trouble you if the Laws were smooth'd and relaxed, but while they are in force, it is fit, and for the Honour of the Government, that they should be executed? But is it likely that those Laws will ever be abated, by your means at least, which you that stile your selves the Church do like so well, as to call and press for their Execution? Why have you so little Honour for those Noble Gentlemen in Parliament, that would have disannull'd them? Some say, let Authority make what Laws they will, they must be obeyed. If you thought more gentle Laws would do better, why do you so much approve of these? If these be so very good and fit, are we ever like to hear of more moderate, if you can hinder them? Your Zeal is for Uniformity, as well as Government: Why may not another Act be as grateful to you, as this Force? and a new Uniformity as desirable as the old? Then you say, 'Tis dangerous to alter Laws and Establishment. You are zealous against Disorder, that is, to

say plainly, you would preserve Order, by cutting us asunder into great Distractions. Ruines before the Gates of a Royal Palace, is an unpleasing offensive Sight. The Ruines of the Nonconformists lie at your very Gates: agree with Surveyors, and wise Builders, to raise out of the Ruines a beautiful Fabrick, for Peace and Love to dwell in: If not, know you assuredly, there are those at work, that will lay you as low as you have done them. And who can be assured of the contrary, but that our holy and honest, our good and faithful Brethren, have persum'd, air'd, and consecrated Common-Goals against our going in? which if we suffer, I wish we may have Grace to endure as they have done; as I am confident we shall be more of the same Spirit with them in such a Case, than now you are.

It cannot be blotted out, that the Clergy and Cardinal of *Lorain* did inflame and inflame the Magistrates; O that this were a Blot only in *English Martyrologies*! How alien is this from the Mind of our Lord? from the Temper of Christianity? And how unlike a Course to persuade Dissenters, or to quiet the Church? Let this go among the Vertues of the Pharisees, Papists, and Friars. The Words of the Reverend Dr. *Burnett*, of the best and worst of Clergy-Men, will not encrease his Honour, or procure him love from many of us. I'll make bold to repeat a few of them: *It is observable, the best Clergy-Men have been the most gentle to those that differed from them. But the Unworthy, who know that a good Cause may be spoiled, but is not likely to prevail in their Hands, and will not trouble themselves with the laborious Methods of conquering Errors, are always apt to extreme and cruel Courses, since they know they must prevail with these, or none at all. History of the Rights of Princes, pag. 257, 258.*

The Apostle's Wish, *I would they were cut off that trouble you*, falls somewhere else, and is not to the purpose it is often produced for. We that are commanded, if we love Christ, to feed his Lambs, are not to sit any on to worry straying Sheep. The Holy-Ghost is often invocated upon us, and therefore except the frequent Invocations be in vain, we are to breath out from that, and not another Spirit.

III. A Word to *Informers*, to whom I have but little to say at present.

How unfavoury is the Memory of *Gardiner* and *Bonner*! the former a cunning Informer, both Instigators and Persecutors. An Informer, in the purest Sence of *Index*, is a naughty Man turn'd honest, when he doth it out of abhorrence of evil Counsels, and Conscience of Duty. A King and Kingdom may owe their Preservation to such a Man. But *Quadruplatores*, Informers for a fourth part of the Forfeitures, or any other Moie-

ty, for Gain, have been branded amongst the worst of Men. When they have run from one way of Wickedness to another, from Avarice and Necessity, to sell their Souls, Truth, Modesty, and the little of Humanity that is continued with the Face and Shape, then they are to be abominated by wise, just, good, and merciful Men. The Days are evil, when such necessary Evils walk about by Day-light. We read of them in *Plautus's Persa. Sat. Tacitus Annal. lib. 3. cap. 25. lib. 4. cap. 30.* and how *Vespasian* commanded them to be whipp'd in the Market-place. *Suet. Vesp. cap. 5.*

All the Threatnings of Torments could not move St. Cyprian to inform the Proconsul of his Brethren in *Carthage*. After other trying Discourses, *Paternus* the Proconsul asked him, *Tell me where are those Presbyters which are said to be in this City?* St. Cyprian answered, *Ye have well ordained, and like Men, that there ought to be no Informers, therefore they ought not to be betrayed by me, but you may find them out; and because ye have judged, that no Man shall accuse himself.* The Proconsul answered, *But I will torment thee, but I will find them out by thee.* The Saint of God answered, *They shall not be destroyed by me.* The Proconsul answered, *It is the Command of the Princes, that the Christians keep no Conventicles, nor go to the Burying-Places of the Martyrs; and if any Man transgress, he must be punished with the Sword.* The Saint of God answered, *Do as thou art commanded.* *Passio B. Cypr. per Pontium ejus Diaconum.* By the Canon of the Council of *Elebris*, if any of the Faithful turned Informer, he should be *excommunicated*.

It was an odious Sight, but much to the Honour of the Justice of those Days, to see Dr. *London* and *Symonds* ride with their Faces to the Horses Tails, and Papers on their Foreheads, to the Pillory for Perjury; two greater and more worshipful than any of you Informers now. Dr. *Burnet's History of the Reformation, Part 1. Book 3. pag. 327.*

You are in great Power, and of Use at present, (even your own Friends esteem you a necessary Evil, but indeed some of you are more necessitous than necessary) you have many Justices ready at your Call, and a Multitude of Followers at your Heels, in many Places. You make a small Gain of the Godliness of some, of the Scruples and Errors of others; but count all, and then the total will come to worse than nothing. I shall not revile you, but by what I know and hear of some, you are a great Reproach to the Christian Religion, and the Scorn of all Men, that have any Spark of Humanity or Vertue left in them. I have faithfully represented true Histories of the Lives and Deaths of some of your Predecessors, that you may take warning, and if peradventure that you may repent: For you have assumed an Office and Calling meerly to serve your Lusts, and your Bel-lies, which before had consumed the little Substance you had (if ever you had.

had any) of your own, or other Mens. If you were baptized, your Godfathers and Godmothers were exhorted to call upon you to hear Sermons: If you had Baptismal Grace, you would do it, and *renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*, all which you serve in this way which you make your Trade, (tho it may be some of you act from a Principle of Malice and Revenge, and that's as bad, if not worse.) At present you act more safely than they that steal and kill ; for you pretend the Law is on your side, by which you have taken away from many Reverend Divines their Books, Goods, yea (many times) the very Beds they lay upon, and have left them destitute of Maintenance for themselves, Wives and Children : Yea, you have taken (or caused to be taken) their Persons, and cast them into loathsome Prisons, which have occasioned the Death of some, and the Sickness and Ruin of many of them ; and had not Royal Favour interposed, you would never have left, till you had utterly ruined all, both Ministers and People. - But ere it be too late, I beseech you consider your evil Ways, and repent, else your Reward will be according to your Work. *Doeg* was an Informer against *David*, and the Priests ; was one of those that *loved Evil more than Good, and Lying rather than to speak Righteousness* ; and his JUDGMENT was, — *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy Dwelling-Place, and root thee out of the Land of the Living.* Psal. 52. 3,5. Read 1 Thess. 2. 15.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Expect to be told of the Sufferings of the Loyal Clergy in the Time of War : I have distinguished between a Time of War and Peace, of doleful Havock, and Security and Law ; but it is not observed. I say now, that these Ministers I have mentioned in the foregoing Treatise have been Loyal Persons, and in the Times of Usurpation ventured their Lives and Estates for the King's happy Return. I know no Man so disingenuous, as to envy the Care that hath been to preserve Mr. *Huddleston* (a Papist) from the Laws, for his good Service about the King, in his Escape. But no such Care was taken of Mr. *Parsons*, Mr. *Heywood*, Mr. *Harrison*, Mr. *Cook* of *Chester*, who was in the Tower when the King was called in, who ventured their Lives and Estates for the King with Sir *George Booth*. Bishop *Walton* would speak civilly to Mr. *Cook*, but told him, he must conform, or he could not help him. How many of the Loyal Clergy were out of Livings or Employments, that did not take their Ease, or enjoy a studious Retirement ? How many that loved Preaching, or did cleave

cleave to their Flocks, that did not enjoy some Liberty and Encouragement? I could reckon up many that had Livings in the City, and preached in Churches without any Let; as Dr. *Hill*, (afterwards Bishop of *Chester*) Dr. *Ball*, Dr. *Wild*, (late Bishop in *Ireland*) Dr. *Hardy*, Dr. *Griffith*, Dr. *Peirson*, (now Bishop of *Chester*) Dr. *Mossome*, Mr. *Farrington*, with many more, besides Abundance in every County. How many of them fled on choice, left their Places, even in the King's Quarters? I could name some of them, when I was a Boy; and now I live where a Minister did voluntarily absent forty Months before he appeared, and in the mean time the Patron presented.

'Tis true, *O. Cromwell*, and his Officers, did once, upon some provocation of a pretended Plot against him, by a Proclamation prohibit their Preaching, keeping Schools, &c. But by the Intercession of that eminent Man Arch-Bishop *Usher*, they had their Liberty again, and preached, and enjoyed their Places all the Time of the Usurpation; and those that were kept out of their Livings, had the Fifts allowed them. I speak not this to excuse the Evils of those Times, but to shew that the Loyal Clergy found some Mercy and Pity even from Usurpers; and some of them have ingenuously confessed, that they received great Kindness from some in Power then: And shall not we now exceed them in Mercy? Does it not become us to act according to the Christian Law, to *overcome Evil with Good*? and according to the Law of the Land, (the Act of Ob'livion) in not reviving the Memory of the Evils of former Days, to the detriment of any Person or Persons?

But now such a Storm is raised, that is ready to carry away not only the Goods, but the Persons of the Nonconformists: I know not the Reason, unless it be because they were too zealous for the Bill of Exclusion. Indeed Sedition and Rebellion is pretended, that they are Enemies to the Government, that they are acting the old Game of *Forty One*, and *Forty Eight*. Let these things be proved, and then let them suffer; I plead not for any such.

Nay, Moderation, and moderate Divines of the Church of *England*, are become now hateful and exposed, and especially if any of us dare be so Bold as to plead for Moderation towards Dissenters; and in so doing we are represented as Enemies to the Church, and threatened to be cast out. 'Tis said, we have reflected on our present Clergy, when it is only such of the Clergy as are over-zealous and fiery, and hinder the Union of Protestants. For if Phaeton (as Dr. *Stillingfleet* in his *Iren.* says) drive the Chariot of the Sun, the World will be seen on Fire: I mean such in the Church, whose Brains, like the Unicorn's, run out into the length of the Horn; such who have more Fury than Zeal, and yet more Zeal than Knowledge or Moderation.

The

The Generality of our present Clergy are great Admirers of Archbishop *Land*, and those that adhered to him; and yet Mr. *Hammond L'Estrange* (one that was a zealous Church-man, and as keen against the Presbyterians as his Name-sake) hath said more of him and them, than any of the moderate Divines now have, or dare to say of the present Clergy. *Viz.*

Mr. *Ham. L'Estrange's* History of K. *Charles the First*, pag. 143, 144.

— *His Zeal to Order* (meaning Arch-Bishop *Land*) carried him thus far, (that is, to put the Canons in Execution) transported him a little too far: The Communion-Table, which formerly stood in the midst of the Church or Chancel, he enjoined it to be placed at the East End, upon a graduated advance of Ground, with the Ends inverted, and a Wooden Traverse of Rails before it, to keep Prophanation off, to which Rails all Communicants were to resort. These things were decent and comely in Contemplation, and had been so in Practice, had they been within the Rule of the Church Directions; but being Anomalous Innovations, and so severely urged, many became thereupon precise, and separated themselves into factious Sidings; nor was this a Schism of an ordinary Size, but grew to that process, to that degree, as, to speak in the Primitive Mode, Altar was erected against Altar, that is, one Bishop impugned and opposed another: For the Bishop of Lincoln (being affronted by one Titly, Vicar of Grantham) published a Tract under a concealed Name, positively asserting therein, That the holy Table anciently did in the Primitive Times, and ought so in ours, according to the Dictates of our Church, stand in gremio, and Nave of the Quire. And as the Arch-Bishop, whilst he so vehemently pursued Order, did a little out-run Authority; so was he unhappy in those he did employ, as Instruments and Subordinates under him, some whereof endeavoured to super-induct many Things, as Will-Worship of their own, and which came within a Mathematical Line of Popery: Nor were they blameless in their Lives, some being vicious even to Scandal, nor of so meek and humble Behaviour as was to be wish'd, but insolent at a rate so intolerable, as one was bold to say, He hoped to live to see the Day, when a Minister shall be as good a Man as any upstart Jack-Gentleman in England. To such a height of Infatuation had a petty Blaze of mistaken Honour elevated this high Flyer, who in lieu of those frolick Days he looked to see, lived to see that very Hierarchy extirpated, and lived to see himself dplumed of all his Pomp. These Exorbitancies of those Sons of Eli from the Rules of Ethics, created a very great Disgust against them; and many well enough affected to their Empire, did exceedingly blame their Imperiosity, &c.

F I N I S.

The Reader (in regard of the Author's Distance from the Press) is desired to amend what Errata he meets with.

Thanks to God for better times! Amen!!



